

[<<Link to School Year 2024-25 Notes](#)

Links to notes from School Year 2025-26 Council Meetings	
September 17, 2025	February 25, 2026
October 22, 2025	March 18, 2026
November 19, 2025	April 15, 2026 at CSUS (840 Cambridge St.), multipurpose room & Zoom
December 17, 2025	May 20, 2026 at Putnam Ave Upper School (100 Putnam Ave.) Design Lab & Zoom, enter from Kinnaird St. at MLK Preschool entrance near the basketball court (door 10)
January 21, 2026	June 17, 2026

June 17, 2026 School Council Notes

In-person representatives: Allan Gately Gehant, Tina Lieu, Alex Bowers, Kitty Breen, Mary MacCarthy (elect), Azaria (elect), Laney (elect), Casey Crosby

Other in-person attendees: Sloan, Hannah, Miley, Jasper, Ellen, Isabella Ehrlich, Kris, Anurag

Representatives on Zoom: Lily Read, Alison Bagg (elect), Connor Epsteinkraus, Tabithalee Howard, Danielle McLaughlin (elect), Alysa Breyer, AlexM, Cullen Buie, Nina Nolan

Others on Zoom: Arjun Jaikumar, Lilli Smith, Maria Collins, Lilli Smith, igp, Kim Bostic Williams, Roshan Kumar, Vivian Pales, Acadia,

Note taker: Mary MacCarthy

Meeting info

- In-person at the CRLS Career & College Resource Center (CCRC) in the main Rindge building. Enter from
- Virtual on Zoom:
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJKKkIYS5.1>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Agenda

- Announcements & Celebrations
- [School Council Election results: caregiver and staff reps](#)
- [Student School Council Election results and methods](#)
- [21st Century Learning Subcommittee Update](#)
- [Spending of School Improvement Plan \(SIP\) Funds in 2025-26](#) (Do they get used up and what were they spent on?)
- [Club funding budget](#): how much, which club and determining essentials vs. extras
- [Update from Non-punitive Space for Student Social/Emotional Respite Subcommittee](#)
- [Update on Culture of Health event at CRLS in October](#)
- [How to make sure both parents get all communications from Aspen](#)

School Council meeting 6/17/2026 - Notes

6:08 PM

School Council Election results: caregiver and staff reps

School Council Members

Elect

[Agenda, Notes, Slides link](#)


Student Representatives:


 Azaria Tsegaye
(12th)


 Laney Porter
(12th)

Parent/Caregiver Representatives:


 Alison Bagg
(rising 9th, 12th)


 Alex Bowers
(rising 11th)


 Cullen Buie
(rising 10th)


 Tina Lieu
(rising 10th, 12th)


 Mary MacCarthy
(rising 10th)


 Danielle McLaughlin
(rising 11th)


 Alex Micolini
(rising 10th)

Staff Representatives:


 Allan Gately Gehant,
Principal & Co-chair
agatelygehan@cpsd.us


 Dr. Sunny Gupta
(Chemistry)


 Lily Rayman-Read
(History)


 Daniel Hikes
(Guidance)


 Jodi Mace
(Guidance)


 Casey Crosby
(SCALE Program)


 Megan Laskarzewski

Community Representatives:


 Connor Epsteinkraus
(Cambridge Public Health Department)


 Nina Nolan
(Office of Workforce Development)

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- Lilli Smith provided background on previous elections:
 - In 2023 there were no Caregiver elections.
 - New process set up in 2024 by Lilli Smith and Rosie Jones; 68 people voted; generally it's hard to get people to vote; trying to do outreach; 2nd election 98 people voted; this time ~114 people voted.
 - There's been community comment that there wasn't enough outreach to less represented groups and in multiple languages early, so efforts are underway to boost outreach.
 - Voting is via Google Forms, but there is a paper ballot option. Promoting elections has been done via via DYK newsletters, family liaisons.
- Lilli and Rosie Jones are running the vote for the new Caregiver Representative Co-Chair.
- Parent Isabella Erhlich - expressed strong concerns about what she calls lack of equity in this election process.

- Mary MacCarthy (parent) - supported Isabella's position RE lack of community knowledge around the election process
- Principal Allan Gately Gehant - agreed that there are concerns and said that April needs to be used to get the word out about the elections, and May to actually do the vote
- Tabithalee Howard - Stated that she was careful about not appearing to be meddling in the election, per protocols.
- Isabella Ehrlich - said that we are not following what's stated in the handbook.
- Kris Dickson (parent) - spoke about her experiences seeing parent hesitation to run, and suggested more involvement by Family Liaisons is necessary; for this to be truly representative, there needs to be a lot more work.
- Tina Lieu - has been lobbying the school newspaper to cover the School Council to increase awareness of what School Council is, as that is needed before someone would consider running for School Council
- Kitty Breen - expressing gratitude RE personal experience with the School Council welcoming her as an HSEP (high school extension program) parent
- Alex Bowers - suggests we need a SubCommittee to plan the elections; suggests talking about this offline later

6:25pm

Student School Council Election results and methods

- Azaria (student) spoke about concerns RE student voting (Azaria reviewed info on slide...)

Student Elections Results & Methods

Students voted through a Google Form, with fraudulent votes (as determined by advisors) being deleted • The initial Google Form used was deleted and replaced several hours into voting, after many students had already voted • As a result the voting window was extended from June 2 - 3 to June 2 - 4	Results for Student Body President were declared to be a 409-409 tie between Marvi Spahiu and Miley Alam • The results were not made public, leading to questions from students as to the integrity of the election • On the morning of June 12th, Marvi was declared the winner, with no elaboration. Indeed, at the time the results were released Marvi himself did not know how or why the tie had been broken in his favor • Mr. Gehant later informed Marvi that due to a bug the form had not counted certain votes, but there has been no such announcement to the wider student body
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- Marvi (declared winner of Student Body President election) spoke on Zoom and addressed communications and transparency issues.
 - Two winners offered to be co-presidents, or to have a run-off in which teachers could also vote; Marvi said he also consulted Principal AGG RE existing procedures etc; Principal agreed to a review; then Marvi says he was declared president via email to entire student body without him or the other candidate being informed... Marvi goes into detail about how the “recount” was done; says no explanation was given to the student body.
- Jasper (student) - explains next slide - RE election protocols - alleges there were various violations; points out that students are supposed to be running elections,

not the adults

Student Government Rights as Compared to Election Process

From the [CPS Rights And Responsibilities Handbook for 2025-26](#):

12.1 - Students shall have the right to an independent, democratic form of self government. All students in good standing shall have the right to vote and to seek and hold office. The student government shall be elected annually.

12.2 - All nominations and election procedures for student office shall be established and implemented by students without interference from, but under the supervision of, any school official, teacher or school employee.

12.3 - All candidates for student office shall have the right to wage a campaign and shall have equal access to school facilities.

2026 Election Process Areas of Concern:

- Additional restrictions on who could run for student body president
- Interference in election proceedings by advisors, taking a role that should have been held by student government
- Restrictions on campaigning on campus, preventing voices of CRLS students from being heard
- Opaque processes, casting doubt on the integrity of the elections

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- Acadia (student) - says she ran to be a School Committee Rep - congratulates winners but says that not publishing results is problematic
- Principal AGG responds - says results not published due to concerns about publishing full dataset (privacy concerns)
- Principal AGG suggests asking CRLS students trained in real elections as poll workers - using them to help run these elections as a student election commission and commit to not run for an office
- Jasper (student) - says using these trained student poll workers is a good idea
- Jasper suggests a reshuffle of Advisors in charge of Student Government due to these concerns
- Azaria says he agrees with Jasper and Acadia
- Miley (student) - one of the 2 Student Body President final candidates - says she got zero formal updates during the process. Concerned that she did not get any meetings with key stakeholders (unlike the other candidate who did when they asked -- both candidates should be present for these update meetings); got no response until very late.

- Concerns about bylaws not being followed; specific candidates not adhering to bylaws; specific concerns - in previous years when students did not self-nominate on time they could not run (this rule not followed this year); candidates skipping class in order to campaign for themselves (not supposed to be allowed); non-voting grades were encouraged to vote; overall - lack of communication and transparency was difficult and confusing.
- Lily Read (educator) - asks Principal AGG to hold a summit with students about these issues
- Anurag (student) - says he ran and submitted his self-nomination late because wifi in the library was down, which advisor said was the only acceptable exception to the deadline . Also defends use of school grounds/facilities to campaign (discussion of whether that was happening during class). Says no communication or transparency overall RE these processes. Says this election has sparked big issues/debates and a one-liner to the student body saying who won was not sufficient
- Jasper - says for next year's election there needs to be a very clear framework etc.

6:49pm

Update from Non-punitive Space for Student Social/Emotional Respite Subcommittee

- Update led by Connor Epsteinkraus. (Connor read update from slide 13).

Subcommittee Report: Social/Emotional Respite Space for Students

Forming a working group of students, educators, social workers, caregivers, and community members to explore:

A Tier 1 Student Support Space Creating a non-punitive space for students who are temporarily unable to participate in class and/or need a brief reprieve or minimal assistance before returning to instruction	Better Utilization of MTSS Tools How can Branching Minds (or other MTSS tools) be better incorporated at the High School to document student support and measure RTIs	Improved Community Partnership Leveraging community partners and resources to offset school expenses while ensuring that all students can be connected to a caring adult during a time of need
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- Lily Read - says it will be important to remind students what the space is for so they know how and when to access it. Reminder this will be a Tier 1 space
- Invitation to write to Connor for further discussion or if anyone wants to get involved: cepsteinkraus@challiance.org
- Tabithalee - asks questions about what the space will look like?
- Lily Read responds by saying there are no answers yet and there's a need for ideas from parents, students, etc.
- Laney (student) - asks how they envision promoting the space to all staff members etc.?
- Connor says - we don't know yet
- Lily says that all admin, security etc. will know and also it will be word-of-mouth
- Danielle (parent) - says accessibility to all is important to consider (disabilities, languages, etc.)

- Connor - agrees with Danielle's concerns

6:59pm

21st Century Learning Subcommittee Update

- Update led by Cullen R Buie.
Summarizes work of the committee since January 2026 (info on slides)
- Comment from Hannah (student) - says there's not a space to report AI when it comes to cheating; says students fear being labelled as a snitch; also it's a concern for student TAs; no consequences right now which is problematic; says educators should be doing more on this; says some students do need guidance on how to not rely on AI, in addition to learning how to use AI efficiently.
- Jasper - student member of this subcommittee - echoes Hannah's concerns; says there are no effective anti-cheating or AI misuse policies; nothing is enforced. We have no school policy on AI use, just an academic integrity policy (but doesn't mention AI).
- Tina - asks Cullen to say more about the positives of AI
- Cullen - says one positive use is adaptive learning
- Lily Read - supports what Cullen says RE some beneficial uses of AI for multi-lingual students
- Connor - RE potential positives of AI - teachers would need to be trained; could be a huge timesaver but a learning curve to get there
- Anurag - says it's good to be discussing how teachers are using AI; says some teachers are using it very obviously, and allegedly some teachers are being pressured to use AI; some teachers using AI for feedback and evaluations; RE Cullen's comments about adaptive learning - says plans to review a tutoring program EDIA for adaptive learning for math (that's part of the math subcommittee)
- Alex B - concerns about how educators are using AI in the classroom; has a child using EDIA) for pre-calc and her student is very frustrated by it; curious how use of AI is being evaluated; also wants to know if Gemini is automatic now and if so why was it turned on?; observes that the Boston Public Schools has opened an AI-only school...

- Samuel (student) - elaborated on Anurag's points - says Idea is a better program than just using a general LLM; using Gemini directly for AP Comp Sci, test scores have gone up 10 points... Suggests that Comp Sci classes have evolving perspective towards AI use... Projects have been greatly changed via vibecoding and LLMs etc.
- Cullen - finishes presentation of slides.. Says original vision of this subcommittee went beyond AI... Consultation with Ms Green (CRLS Business Teacher) Discussion of skills that graduates/students are missing (all listed on the slide)...

MEETING FOUR / MAY 26, 2026


Essential skills, with Ms. Green

CRLS business teacher (12 years) and DECA advisor. Classes are anchored in Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) and the MA Workplace Employability Skills.

Skills students most lack post-COVID	Ms. Green's recommendations
/ Social and cross-cultural skills; when to listen versus speak / Teamwork: roles, timelines, deadlines, shared workload / Time management and sustained focus / Clear, professional communication	/ Pick one or two priority skills to focus on school-wide each year / Have students self-assess and target their own gaps / Use AI to check work, not to replace the thinking

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- Tina - says she and Kitty Breen met with the District-level AI Working Group rep (Gina Roughton) (info on slide)... Guidance will be published in September 2026.

District-level AI Working Group

Co-facilitated by Gina Roughton, Director Educational Technology and Matt Landry, Media Arts Manager

22 staff (Kindergarten-12th grade, district) with diverse views on AI

Met 2025-26 to update school district's general guidance on generative AI (Fall 2024)

Guidance will be published in September 2026

Description of CRLS AI Professional Development (slide 21, commented by Tina)

CRLS AI Professional Development

- List of professional development offered (last 4 years)
 - E.g., how to model best practices, how to live out ethical/purposeful use of AI
- Student voice from March 2025 survey of student AI use
- 2025-2026 CRLS year-long, all-staff PD series, *Teaching and Learning in the Age of AI*, was shaped by student survey data and grounded in core educational values. The series explored how those values can remain at the center of teaching and learning as we engage with AI. **Human agency, Equity/access, Ethics and responsibility, and Critical literacy (& media skills)**
- Participated in Imagine Education Council at Harvard's Center for Digital Thriving to bring their agency-centered AI literacy framework to CRLS. Integrated these practices into classrooms to increase transparency and dialogue around AI use.
- CRLS AI Working Group: Led by Mr. Tal SebellShavit (CRLS staff)
- This month the CRLS AI Working Group will recommend a school-wide AI Attribution statement and updated CRLS academic integrity guidelines that explicitly address AI use.

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- Isabella Ehrlich - encourage student voices to go to the school committee meetings on these issues, saying the youth voice and perspective is crucial on this issue

- Kris Dickson - saw some experiments in CompSci classes and her opinion it was a disaster
- Sunny Gupta - AI field is very quickly evolving, how to interact with it is also evolving very quickly; given how fast-moving everything is, it's hard to make recommendations... Says he's seen some school work shift already (more work being done on paper etc.)
- Cullen - agrees with Sunny; says one action item listed on slides is student-staff collaboration will be key, starting with agreed values.
Mentions other potential action items - define some essential soft skills that should be prioritized (example: teamwork); professional development on AI for staff...

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE


Proposed action items & discussion

Potential Action items

- / Establish a student-led working group integrating CRLS values and AI policy
- / Choose one or two essential skills to prioritize school-wide each year
- / Fund teacher professional development on AI [high priority]
- / Bring these challenges and opportunities to curriculum leaders
- / Pilot AI in one subject, with policy built from CRLS values

Questions for the council

- ? What other action items are recommended?
- ? How do we use AI as a tool without creating over-reliance?
- ? How should we redesign assessments for an AI era?

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- Tina - says there's been discussion of a "community of practice" to discuss AI use, teachers should be able to learn from each other
- Cullen - says there needs to be space to make mistakes
- Cullen - says committee will summarize today's feedback and incorporate it into the start of the work for next year...
- Samuel - says he's doing an internship at a lab... Spoke to a CRLS grad who says you're wasting your time if you're not using the latest LLMs but also that you need the baseline of knowledge.

- Alysa Breyer (teacher) - says the PD each time felt like a Google ad; obviously the AI is not free and is harmful in so many ways, and being pushed on students in harmful ways; expresses concerns about the partnership with Google
- Cullen - responds to Alysa that the committee isn't pushing the use of any particular tool
- Principal AGG - says the district has a data breach policy with all vendors (to prevent vendor from using end user data)
- Kris Dickson - offers examples of data privacy policies
- [from scratch pad] - [Tina] I agree with what Kris said about using too much AI to code. Until you know what good code is supposed to look like, coding will just be AI slop.
- [from scratch pad] Potential resource:
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/ai/default.html>
- [from scratch pad] - [Cullen] Supplemental Resources provided by experts the subcommittee met with
[UNESCO Framework](#)
[Teach.AI Framework](#)

7:42pm

Spending of School Improvement Plan (SIP) Funds in 2025-26 (Do they get used up and what were they spent on?)

- Discussion led by Principal AGG
- Says that school year is 97% complete, spending is 97% complete.
- Alex B - asks for breakdown of spending, Principal AGG says he can provide. It is publicly available.
- Kitty Breen - Asks Principal if he feels that he has enough \$\$, I.e. is not reaching goals a money issue or caused by other reasons?
- Principal AGG: Between general and SIP (school improvement plan) budget, things are getting paid for. But some items should be migrated out of SIP to the general fund. For example, UAspire helps seniors fill out financial aid forms (was

added to SIP many years ago and the vast majority of seniors use this service), but it's still living there, and should be migrated to the general fund.

- Kris Dickson - asks how to grow each budget
- Ellen (student) - school spent \$70k on Yondr pouches; for next year there's mention of apps to use instead - wants info on that
- Principal AGG - says the Yondr pouches were a mistake; apps to replace Yondr are being evaluated...they must comply with the district data privacy policies
- Hannah (student) - asks if next school year will start with Yondr?
- Principal AGG says yes, Yondr pouches will be used at the start of next school year until an alternative solution is implemented; graduating seniors (happily) returned their Yondr pouches which will be issued to incoming freshmen

7:50pm

Club funding budget: how much, which club and determining essentials vs. extras

- Slide gives breakdown of spending

Club Spending

[Agenda, Notes, Slides link](#)



Advisor Stipends

\$155,000

Buses

\$25,000

Registration Fees

\$21,000

Custodial/Safety Details

\$10,000

Club Participatory Budget (PB)

FY 26: \$50,000

FY 27: \$50,000

FY 28: \$50,000

Often Requested/Always Denied

Out of State Travel funds

Clothing/Gear funds

Food funds

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- Azaria asks: is funding for out of state travel is always denied from the PB budget?
- Tabithalee specifies that district doesn't support paying for food. Says an academic club that's advancing / qualifies for something WILL be considered for out-of-state travel etc. Also says clubs are encouraged to do their own fundraising in creative ways etc.
- Alex Bowers (parent) - asks for more detailed breakdown of spending; also says it's hard to know what clubs are active, what some of them do, how they're funded, etc.
- Hannah (student) - says club info is available online; as someone who's on yearbook says a lot of info about clubs is not up to date (example club advisors info hasn't been updated for ~ 5 years)
- Jasper (student) - worth nothing that clubs spend and wildly different amounts of money. \$50 for chess timers for chess club vs. thousands for Model UN that has to travel.
- Tabithalee - gives advice on how club advisers can be pro-active to pursue funds when needed
- Principal AGG - says there's huge differences RE the size, needs, budget etc. of clubs

8pm

Update on Culture of Health event at CRLS in October

- Update from Connor - refers to slides

Update: October Culture of Health Event

- **Idea:** use key findings from the YRBS data to frame a student-driven conversation about the culture of wellness at CRLS, sending the message “your school cares about your whole self.”
- CPHD + Gen Ed Social Workers have held 2x meetings so far
- Planning an assembly for October

Goals of Assembly:

1. Increase awareness of key findings from the YRBS and highlight connections between data and lived experience
2. Normalize conversations about mental health and well-being
3. Reduce stigma around support seeking
4. Cultivate a school culture that centers well-being and values each student’s identity
5. Highlight opportunities for students to engage in culture of wellness via clubs, programs, classes, support staff.. etc

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8:01pm

How to make sure both parents get all communications from Aspen

- Principal AGG - trying to resolve this (currently only “primary” caregiver is sent communications) One possible workaround in the meanwhile is to make parents aware that the one who signs up the family will end up getting all the school notices as the “primary caregiver.”

[Additional notes from scratch pad]:

Suggest a topic for a future School Council meeting (next meeting September 16, 2026)

As a new member, it would be helpful to review the school improvement plan ahead of the September 2026 meeting.

Do we have periodic agenda items to review the school improvement plan and examine data demonstrating performance towards goals within the SIP?

Does the school council regularly examine student experience and outcome data disaggregated by student groups to fulfil its obligations to work toward racial equity and equity for student groups who have been historically underserved?

Graduation Location. With the issue of insufficient space/tickets are there other locations school council can look into?

Meeting ends at 8:03pm

May 20, 2026 School Council Notes

In-person representatives: Allan Gately Gehant, Alex Bowers, Kitty Breen, Nina Nolan, Cullen Buie, Tina Lieu

Other in-person attendees: Anurag, Linda Radvzilla, Rosie Jones, Jaime Lichenstein, and others (~21 total)

Representatives on Zoom: Sunny Gupta, Alys Breyer, Casey, Connor E, Lianne, Lily Rayman-Read, Megan L, Sara A,

Others on Zoom: Acadia, Rich Younger, Anania, Azaria, Brianne, Carroll Magill, Christine, Ena, Erin, Isabella Ehrlich, Jasper, Jodi, Kim Bostic-Williams, Lisa Downing, Maria Collins, Myrtle, Paul, Plachikkat Radha, Roshan Kumar, Shannon B, Sibylle Dyer, Sucharita Varanasi, Sue, Suzette Sajjabi, Vivian Pales, Fareedah, Suzette, Morgan, Laura, Rachel,

Note taker: Nina Nolan

Meeting info

- In-person at the Design Lab at Putnam Avenue Upper School (100 Putnam Ave.)
Enter from Kinnaird St. at MLK Preschool entrance near the basketball court (door 10)
- Virtual on Zoom:
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJkKkIYS5.1>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)

- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Agenda

- RSTA update and future directions
- Update: Vaping in bathrooms
- Proposed non-punitive space for students needing social emotional respite

Community topics

- How 8th to 9th grade math path evaluations happen
- Does CRLS use up its School Improvement Funds? >>Deferred to June
- CRLS students and Cambridge Main Library
- Health 2 requirement

RSTA Update and Future Directions

Enrollment has increased from 891 students in 2021-22 to 1266 in 2026-27

Exploratory increased enrollment

Career related offerings include Career Seminars for seniors:

- 2026-27 Real Estate Course—professionals speak to students about pathways
- 2027-28 Legal and Protective

Trying to increase exposure to careers that don't require a college degree.

Many students hope to do job shadow or internships.

RSTA students in Co-op programs can get paid opportunities.

Internships can be paid or unpaid.

Workplace opportunities include 9 students at Audible, Cambridge 911, Spaulding Rehab.

Some RSTA students earn OSHA 10 cards by graduation.

This summer, 10 Carpentry students will be working for the City of Cambridge at KLo as part of renovation.

RSTA is exploring expansion to plumbing or electrical, looking at labor demand. These are fields projected to grow in the future.

Question about class demographics. Ms. Radzvilla said they parallel what happens in the different industries.

Question about expanding Exploratory→There are schedule constraints.

Four RSTA students completed ½ Associates degree at Franklin Cummings before graduation from CRLS.

From the scratch pad: Besides adding more building trades (HVAC, Plumbing, Electrical), we should be offering Cosmetology. Many, many students would enroll in that program.

Update: Vaping in Bathrooms

41 staff trained in iDecide

3 sessions run by Deans so far

Vape detectors in single stall bathrooms

Removed doors on student bathroom doors over April break; putting doors back on some so people feel comfortable using them

Teen health survey indicates there is a small number of students engaging in vaping. They are mostly “repeat offenders.” Some new students have been trying it.

How has iDecide actually being used? Does it work? Is the school sticking with it or will it be replaced?

- iDecide focus is on Harm reduction and educational

- iDecide was used after incidents during prom last year

- Students felt it made them feel like they had a problem

Repeat offenders face detention. Is the school helping students with addiction?

How does school track how many/which students are caught / suspended / complete iDecide around vaping?

Bathroom door removal–should have been tested out before

Immediate benefit: Deters groups of students from going into bathroom at the same time

Students are saying that Accountability sessions are not effective

Need culture of enforcement

What program did Somerville HS do? (84 movement?)

What if the school reached out to families of students who vape?

Happens at level of suspension.

We should partner with families to address

Does vaping education happen in Health 1? Yes

Safety First

Extends into Health 2

What about a weekend program to address addiction to vaping?

Not in principal's purview

Why do students use the bathroom as their space to vape?

Neighbors also complain students are vaping in the backyards, parking lot.

Youth don't fully understand the problem with vaping, how it is harmful. Seems like a joke. It's social, done while hanging out. Across demographics. More people than we think, students don't fully understand the effects.

Engage students on this. Some students are addicted. Some do it for social reasons. Have a "cool" student group address it.

Mis-education, not fully understanding the risks of vaping. Students think vaping is "Not as bad as cigarettes."

Help students understand long term effects of vaping. A casual thing can lead to something bigger.

Use design thinking, have students involved. Likely the issue will be around for a while. Cigarettes were around for a long time.

Make room for discussions, help students learn implications of vaping, every student take the class, graduation requirement.

From the scratch pad: I'm concerned about the approach we have to talking about this issue in the school council. The discussion focuses more on the needs of the students who are inconvenienced by the students vaping than the students who need help to stop vaping.

Can we get a fuller picture of the school's vision for iDecide and what it is capable of as a program and what the staff capacity actually is. I have been told that despite extensive training (40 staff members?) only 1 iDecide group has met this year, at the very beginning of the year. I

am looking for more context about why this is. If it has been determined that it isn't effective then what will you do to offer support to the students who need it?

How can we provide more help for students who are vaping? This is a habit that has the potential to cause lifelong harm to their bodies. It is highly addictive and for some is not a matter of choice once they are addicted. (Many students are vaping nicotine but weed also has the potential to be addictive). The school has been providing a space for students to begin vaping and needs to be part of the solution in helping them stop.

Generally vaping starts in/around middle school age rather than high school, often from parental or peer influence. Having an educational program be present before vaping is even a consideration, especially explaining long and short term health effects in early education (early middle school as opposed to health I) would be massively helpful

Proposed social emotional respite space for students

Idea is for the school to provide students agency in their own day to adjust as needed. Students will have the option to go to a space.

Lily Raymond-Read and Connor Epsteinkraus are taking the lead on this. They will start a working group. They need to identify a space, preferably in a central location, possibly former BAM/WOW rooms. Want to have a soft pilot for this intervention space or "Chill Zone." Staff will follow up on students who use the space frequently to help them. It is a creative solution to address underlying issues for troubling behavior like vaping in the bathroom.

This is a good example of a Tier 1 intervention. Any student who can't be present where they are supposed to be can go here. Staff will keep track of who is accessing space in an effort to identify what Tier 2 supports students may need, whether it is academic or something else, and what the patterns are. The goal is to get students back in the classroom space.

Staff are excited about it. Ms. Read and Connor are looking for people to join the subcommittee.

In response to questions:

- Space for anyone who just can't be in the class; they can talk to a staff person (TBD who that is.)
- There aren't any non-punitive options right now for students.
- Having a safe space can help with large building that can be overwhelming

- For students to opt in
 - Not envisioned for teachers to send disruptive students to
 - Option for students who are not yet disruptive to go
 - Prevent dysregulation
- Need widespread education that the space exists
- Bright program is only accessible to small number of students, not an opt in
 - 30-40 students per semester
- Chill Zone is for all students
 - Not to miss whole period, shorter time

From the scratch pad: Cullen Buie: I imagine that ideas like this have been done at other schools, what can we learn from them? I love this idea, but think that it would be great to get a sense for what's already been done elsewhere.

Parent (staying anonymous to protect my kid's anonymity): Just wanted to say that my child does often experience dysregulation at school, and their teachers have been very supportive and responsive at creating different "break" spaces and opportunities for them, both within and outside of the classroom (take a walk, briefly visit the library, etc.). Some breaks are scheduled and proactive and some are reactive, as needed. My hope is that for students who demonstrate a pattern of needing the respite space that the next level of Tier 2 support would include making sure that their teachers are embedding these kinds of break opportunities into class. My kiddo has an IEP but you shouldn't need an IEP to get this kind of compassion and support at school. (And you already have some fantastic teachers who know how to do it well!)

Community Topics:

How 8th to 9th grade math path evaluations happen

8th graders are getting Algebra 1 at the middle schools. Based on the school, there isn't communication around placement to 8th grade families.

Out of district transfers have to share documentation of their math courses.

Registrar is looking at classes. Double ups have increased.

Some 9th graders are already taking 11th grade level math. They don't have outside options.

Families/students might not understand this.

Geometry happens in 10th grade to align with MCAS testing.

How many students are getting additional help outside of the classroom?

Students transferring in as sophomore or junior, different math sequence, how are they figuring into this structure? Integrated Math is another challenge to match.

DESE has an approved curriculum for Integrated Math.

Set boundaries for equity reasons

Students following a path, families can protest and move differently

Look holistically at curriculum for equity reasons

Diagnostic test or iReady so students can take a class at their level

Math is limited in terms of electives. Multi Variable Calculus is the highest level.

From the scratch pad: One additional thing that the math subcommittee is currently working on: We are attempting to expand the bridge to algebra program to other subjects and other years to allow for kids who want to focus on their math education to have that opportunity without the need to spend money on an outside program.

How are out of district students allowed to take advanced classes? Do they have to take a certain test? I know a few families whose children complained that the first month of Algebra 2 was really just Algebra 1 because those kids did not know the curriculum. How is that handled when a teacher needs to teach a lower level math for a good length of time to catch students up who probably should not be at that level?

Does CRLS use up its School Improvement Funds?-->Moved to June meeting

CRLS students and Cambridge Main Library

Open campus is for going to stores during lunch. Library is not an option for students.

CRLS students in the library are having a significant effect on staff. There is vaping.

There are slurs against patrons. The library has lost staff because of this.

CRLS staff do walk-arounds, but don't send students back to class.
Library staff have a text thread with library administration. They need something more proactive.
Students don't realize the library is off limits. They make noise, don't put food away.
There is a safety concern. There are 30 students typically in the library.
Tracking students takes away from library staff doing their regular jobs.
Starting at 10 am, there are 5-10 students at Tech Bar.

Other businesses have a CRLS staff person at the entrance, can this happen at the library?

Mr. Gehant will talk to safety staff.

What message are students being told when they enter the library building?-->Not the library's responsibility to track students.

Students are demonstrating that they need spaces to go to that are non punitive, non classroom.

There is urgency to prevent this from happening during the school day. In the library, students are outside of school custody.

Does the school require students to display student id? It would make it easier for teachers to know who the students are.

The school knows students are not in class, why is this okay?

Disruption seems to be from underclassmen.

A teacher went to the library and counted 42 students during Lunch C; majority underclassmen; rude and disrespectful; there to socialize, be with friends. Students saying they go to the library playing Roblox. Security and teachers entering library may not be allowed. Librarians have been handling a lot.

From the scratch pad: Cullen Buie: I'd recommend someone from CRLS observe the situation, interview students, and get to know why students are using the library as an extension to campus. It's also striking to me that today we've discussed (1) vaping in the restrooms, (2) implementing a 'chill' space for students that need a moment to compose themselves, and (3) students hanging out/eating/vaping in the library. I suspect that all of these issues are related and probably affect the same subset of students. [Side Point] Does our student population have a Roblox/video game problem?

Students are not expected to do academic work when their teacher is out (at LEAST once a week for my student). They often are told to sign in at their LC and then they can do what they want. This is really problematic for safety

reasons. Once I went in to bring him a medication and the school had no idea where he was because he left the LC. Sitting in their LC for 80 minutes is not a good option either. My son has 2 classes this semester where the teacher is out at least once a week. That is a lot of down time and missed academics. When there is a sub, like one day last week, they showed a Disney movie. My student goes to the library sometimes when this happens.

Health 2 requirement

For class of 2028

Student petition asking for this to be reconsidered

Well received by students who have done class

AI literacy suggested by student

Related to mental health issues

Seems to fit in Health 2

Possible to embed but not replace Health 2

School committee discussed

601 signatures on petition

Concerns: Impacts schedules, takes up whole semester, students are stressed out, prevents taking art classes, 9th and 10th graders support (petition), program came up because of a sports team, not these students.

Underclassmen affected because they have to take class which happens every day instead of every other day like Health 1. Maybe combine Health 1 and 2 into one every other day class for a year?

Schedule is the problem, not the class.

Parents and students like the class but the schedule is challenging.

Those against the curriculum don't know what the class is about. Junior level course.

Topics already covered in middle school and high school.

Can content be covered during Falcon Block or during asynchronous modules?

Why is this mandatory? What do we want students to get out of it? What impact do we want it to have on students?

Coming back to understand a topic from early years to later years reinforces ideas

Mental health is a focus of Health 2

Optional because not everyone needs extra boost or to take class

Can it be a summer class?

Is content getting through to students? They don't seem to be paying attention to Health 1, even more so Health 2.

Idea of what is important to take during high school—message for Health 2 is to counter the dominant narrative about what is important in life (college prep)
Everyone should have access to, can be more beneficial than we give it credit
Schedule—adding a 5th class will add a year to education. Advocate for more education, not take away.

From the scratch pad: Health 2 requirement

Cullen Buie: Can someone articulate what the pros/cons are for this Health 2 requirement? I wasn't here last year so I don't know why it was implemented. I would also like to point out the irony that we've talked about substance abuse, absenteeism, and in previous meetings 'AP culture', all things some view as detrimental to student health. I'm not sure that getting rid of a health class that touches on some of these subjects in order to add more 'academic' classes is actually going to improve student health. These days there are a plethora of challenges young people have to face and I think that more education in these areas (mental health, sexual health, finances, addiction) is a good thing.

I would like to name that we spend EVERY SCHOOL COUNCIL meeting talking about students who want to accelerate. EVERY MEETING. What is wrong with slowing down and learning something else? What is wrong with learning something that isn't purely academic? What is wrong with learning some actually applicable life skills? School should not be about rushing through and collecting the most challenging classes you can. (And I agree with everything Cullen said in the paragraph above me.)

What is wrong with learning something that is academically challenging? What is wrong with taking rigorous classes? I'm all for the health of students, but half the time everyone here is talking about student responsibility (as with the attendance policy whenever it's brought up, when practically everyone in the administration is saying that students need to be more responsible and just not be sick) so I think this is just a student responsibility to find on their own. Perhaps it could also be brought up and taught during Falcon Block, or before school, or whatever works, but schools are meant for learning. People should learn, what they are interested in.

Closing

Next meeting is Weds, June 17. In person location will be at CRLS

April 15, 2026 School Council Notes

In-person representatives: Allan Gately Gehant, Casey Crosby, Tina Lieu, Sunny Gupta, Kitty Breen, Nina Nolan, Cullen Buie, Tabithalee Howard,

Other in-person attendees: Jayla, Azaria, Rosie Jones, Jasper, Anurag, Jamie Lichenstein, Danielle McLaughlin, Sam

Representatives on Zoom: Connor Epsteinkraus, Megan Laskarzewski, Alex Bowers, Lily Rayman-Read

Others on Zoom: Rachel Williams-Giordano, Jeff Gavronik, Kris Dickson,

Note taker: Alex Bowers

Meeting info

- In-person at the multipurpose room of Cambridge Street Upper School (840 Cambridge St.)
- Virtual on Zoom:
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJKKkIYS5.1>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Agenda

Notes 95% complete, final edit underway



Agenda

[Agenda, Notes](#)
[Slides link](#)



6:00 - 6:05PM	Announcements & Celebrations
6:05 - 6:20PM	School Council Elections
6:20 - 6:45PM	Advanced Placement Climate & Culture
6:45 - 7:25PM	Thrive Report
7:25 - 7:40PM	Caregiver-Teacher Conferences
7:40 - 7:50PM	Community Topics (your ideas)
7:50 - 8PM	Closing

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Announcements & Celebrations

Item	Date	Description
Caregiver Academy	April 16	How to use Aspen, Google Classroom; AI and education
CRLS School Council	May 20	Meeting will be held at PAUS, in the multipurpose room (100 Putnam Avenue) and on Zoom (same link)
Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2026	N/A	The YRBS took place on Friday 3/27, and 1,593 students (~78%) completed the survey.
School Council Exit Ticket Results	N/A	27 Responses Participation: Zoom (63%). In-person at CRLS (37%) Virtual Attendees: 17% would attend in-person (CRLS (7), PAUS (4), 3 (RAUC, Amigos, CSUS), 5 (online best option)
CRLS Principal Search Survey	Due April 30:	CRLS Principal Search Survey for CRLS community
Principal Search	April 28	Virtual Community Listening Session on the principal search

School Council Elections

Election Timeline

- The election will run from June 1 through June 12
- Nominations open
- After May 22, compile all caregiver self-nomination responses into candidate profiles, prepare ballots, run the caregiver representative election between June 1 and June 12, and announce the results around June 18.

Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC)

- The Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) runs the educator election
- Running elections for four two-year staff positions on the school council
- The same educators have been running the caregiver elections for the past two years, they'd love new volunteer(s) to help with the process
- Completing term: Dr. Breyer, Dr. Gupta, Ms. Rayman-Read and Ms. Sapienza
- Two reps complete terms in June 2027, and the principal is always one of the staff school council representatives

Parent/caregiver positions

- [CRLS Family Connections](#) is running an election for five two-year parent/caregiver positions on the school council.
- Nominations are open April 15 through May 22
- Election held June 1 through 12, results announced June 18
- Completing term: Alex Bowers, Lianne Fisman, Tina Lieu, and Marcela Millan. Kitty Breen is graduating from council as her child graduates!
- Two rising 10th grade caregiver reps complete their terms in June 2027

Student Representatives

- Current student representatives will be graduating in June; the CRLS student government will hold elections for our two one-year student positions that are available for school year 2026-2027

Considerations

- Selecting a co-chair: Speaker 1 raises the issue of selecting a co-chair, suggesting various methods, including electing the co-chair from existing representatives (in 2024 the highest vote-getter selected as chair)
- Notetaking: Proposes that reps agree to note-take for one meeting and sign up for it in advance; add note-taking responsibilities to the nomination form.

Advanced Placement Climate & Culture

Principal Gately-Gehant provided an overview of recent student enrollment and achievement in AP classes:

- AP Course Participation Distribution (CRLS offers 29 AP courses)
- Sample AP Credit Policies at various colleges
- Colleges where the most CRLS graduates have enrolled (Classes of 2016 through 2021)
- Enrollment in Post-Secondary by AP Course Taking
- Data that Low-income student outcomes improved in every subject (comparing enrollment, completion, and retention compared to the prior school year)
- Access to AP resources is improving but not equitably, with a roughly 25 point gap maintained even when specific numbers change (non-low income 76.1%, low income 51.2%)

Conclusions based on the data:

- Students can succeed once enrolled
- Retention supports are working
- The bottleneck is still AP entry
- If CRLS wants AP equity gains to continue, the next step is expanding who sees a clear, early path into AP

Recommendations and Next Steps based on the data:

- Inclusive AP pathways: Develop clearer, department-aligned pathways with explicit on-ramps for underrepresented students.
- Early advising (Grades 9–10): Strengthen targeted academic preparation and counseling before students reach AP-eligible grade levels.
- Disaggregated data use: Continuously track AP participation by income, race, and department to surface and close equity gaps.

Faculty Advisory Council – Ideas on AP Culture

- A subset of the FAC has been developing a proposal to establish recommended limits on the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses high school students may enroll in concurrently at CRLS (see slides for rationale; also [CRLS FAC position paper](#))
- Adolescent Brain Development: Mismatch between Cognitive demands and Neurological Development → Frustration → Anxiety → Avoidant Behaviors
- Compared CRLS approach to AP Classes to select local high schools (Concord-Carlisle, Newton North, Newton South, Somerville, Milton) that are either a) piloting limits on the number of AP classes students can take a semester, b) limiting AP classes to juniors and seniors, c) offering limited AP classes and exams.
- FAC stated that a) college admissions offices do not hold limits against applicants, b) 86 of the 100 schools accept only 4 and 5 scores, and c) AP leadership recommends students take no more than 2 AP classes at a time.

Faculty Advisory Council – Recommendations:

That CRLS limit the number of AP classes that a student can take as follows with exceptions only when granted by application:

Grade 9:	0
Grade 10:	1
Grade 11:	3
Grade 12:	4

Members commented:

- AP Culture and Climate at CRLS that pushes students to the college/academic track
- Review of past three years of CRLS site council meetings where AP were discussed versus Tier2 supports
- The push to Honors for All (All Honors) enforces the idea that to be successful a student must be academically inclined (the College Prep track (now phased out) was also discussed) and serious students may take AP classes because they find the Honors classes may have behavior issues (not sure if this is accurate)
- Concerns about the over-emphasis on AP courses, which may exclude other students and demographics, are discussed.
- Concerns that many colleges no longer offer course credit; limit the number of AP courses that they will acknowledge AP credits may allow a student to skip an intro class – but some colleges still do accept AP courses for credit (MA public universities, BHCC, etc.)
- An AP teacher notes the high frequency of requests for extensions and regrades, indicating stress among students.
- A teacher highlights that out of 500 students, roughly 25% have not taken a single AP class
- The motivations behind students taking AP courses are discussed, including curiosity, college admissions, and academic rigor.
- An attendee, a professor at BU and Boston Children's, emphasizes the benefits of AP courses beyond college credit, including admissions and preparation.
- There is an unhealthy prioritization of classes and the constant stress cycle among students.
- An attendee shares personal experiences of students with different motivations for taking AP courses, including self-motivation and academic curiosity.
- Attendees discuss the correlation between academic pressure and mental health, suggesting the need for better support systems.
- The FAC suggests focusing on risk-to classes and elective learning for younger students, allowing more flexibility for older students.

- An attendee emphasizes the importance of equity in AP course enrollment, particularly for students receiving waivers for the SAT
- An attendee argues against blanket limitations on AP course enrollment, suggesting individualized support and resources for students.
- From the scratch pad: I agree with Ms. G's comments on the stress levels that AP students are experiencing. We can limit this for student's mental health. [Nina Nolan]
- From the scratch pad: I would hesitate to make decisions like this without taking student input, especially when it can restrict students' access to rigorous classes. [Jasper Caravan]
- From the scratch pad: [Cullen Buie] There is an interesting parallel between this discussion about AP classes at CRLS and a discussion currently happening at MIT. Historically, MIT has had no limit on the number of classes/units a student can take. If you want to take two classes that meet at the same time, go ahead. If you want to take nine classes (the normal load is four), have at it. The reasoning for this has been that MIT doesn't want to limit the exceptionally talented/motivated student from exploring their interests. However, there is now a discussion about limits because this culture of allowing anyone to overload themselves has driven an entire culture in which all students, regardless of talent/motivation, feel pressure to max themselves out. Upperclassmen tell freshmen, 'if you're sleeping, you're not doing it right.' MIT is currently in a conundrum where it wants to maintain the culture of allowing no limits for exceptional students, but doing so in a way that doesn't harm the general population. It's not clear what the solution will be, but the discussion is very similar to the AP discussion at CRLS. What I heard in the meeting is that CRLS should not limit APs because it will tamper the curiosity of students with an insatiable appetite to learn. That might be true, but how many students truly fit that mold? 1%? 10%? I have no idea, but my hypothesis is that it's a relatively small number. But this small number is having a huge impact on the culture of the entire school. I suspect that the handful of students taking 10+ APs and thriving, are implicitly putting pressure and stress on the broader population that might feel like they need to keep up but can't.

Thrive Report

A two-year study by THRIVE! Funded by Cambridge Community Foundation and Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) to ***“surface specific strategies the district can deploy to reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps and improve outcomes for all students—particularly those who have been historically left behind.”***

Part I: Examined CPSD Central Administration (released December 2023)

Recommendations:

- **Personnel:** Use existing staff, coordinate overlapping efforts, consider needs beyond staff for new initiatives (e.g., coordination, data, training)
- **Shared vision:** Fix inconsistent interpretations of how to implement district plan goals. Use accountability team to stay on track with evidence
- **Systems:** All depts. should consistently use data and link budget requests to demonstrated need. Use disaggregated dashboard to show student need and then recommend supports.
- **Demand accountability & results in vendor agreements:** - Outline specific student population served, required service dosage, intended student outcomes, clear timelines for implementation and criteria for renewal decisions based on documented results based programs and measure success
- **Goals:** Invest in overarching goals instead of making small line item adjustments.
- **Allocations to Outcomes:** Link allocations to outcome goals
- **Budgeting:** Explore through school-based empowerment and decision making
 - Students, families, staff collaboratively identify and prioritize investments for each school using school discretionary funds.
 - Instead of engagement at districtwide input sessions move to sustained, school-located cycles that share data, co-select interventions for investment, and monitor impact with stakeholders.

Part II: Investigated how resources were used to mitigate the achievement and opportunity gaps through documented best practices for each CPS school and delivers via a) an equity assessment, b) the status of in-school programming with strengths and weaknesses, c) a tailored school performance improvement plan.

Achievement gaps (MCAS 2024)

- **ELA:** Black and Hispanic students score 10–20 points below White and Asian peers in MCAS
- **Math:** Black and Hispanic students score approximately 20 points below White and Asian peers.
- **Chronic absenteeism:** average 34.0% with higher rates among Hispanic (46.1%), Multi-race (41.5%), and Black (36.1%) students

Discipline disparities (2023-24)

- Disproportionate suspensions for Black and Hispanic students [62 out-of-school suspensions (2.6%): Black 4.3%, Hispanic 4.0%, White 1.3%]
- CRLS Culture & Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

- School-wide PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) system used during Falcon Block 2x a week with Wayfinder in classrooms
- Restorative circles run by Restorative Practices Specialist and conflict resolution pathway via student mediators (with school-based mediator)
- 40+ staff trained in iDecide as suspension alternative

CRLS Academic Tutoring

- Based on DESE/CPS data, Tutoring program is under enrolled, “which likely accounts for the lack of observable results at the population level.
 - ~380 (18%) CRLS students should be in tutoring
 - 169 Now enrolled (8% CRLS students)

CRLS Intervention Teams

- Role: LC teams look at referrals (for help) and identify at-risk learners
- No standardized Tier 2 and Tier 3 curricula means no consistent evidence-based interventions
- Current Tier 2: co-taught classes, restorative circles, iDecide training, small groups led by social workers
- Current Tier 3: pull-outs according to IEPs, 504 plans, and BRYT program (p. 5 [CRLS THRIVE! Guide](#))

CRLS Other Areas for Growth

- Chronic absenteeism strategy lacks a complete needs assessment. Depends heavily on notifications and new “No Credit” policy
 - Need layered, evidence-based Tier 2/3 interventions.
- Families with chronically absent students connected to community resources ad hoc
 - Clearer coordination and systematic mentoring/home-visit needed.
- Additional external mental-health linkage is requested by staff
 - Greater use of school-based mental health staff and licensed clinical social workers implementing evidence-based programs needed
- Family engagement beyond language liaisons and ParentSquare
 - Add structured, evidence-based family-engagement programs

CRLS Tier 1 School Performance Improvement Plan (to begin April 2026)

- Second Step (plug-in SEL curriculum) - 25-minute, video-anchored, weekly mini-lessons. \$8.50 per student (\$17,000/year).
- Expected Impact: 15–25%↓ in office discipline referrals; +2 days average attendance; +0.1 GPA* for 9th-grade cohort

Equity-Centered PBIS** Professional Development & Data

- Tune-Up. (Example: Portland Public Schools saw a 38% drop in Black/White referral disparity in 2 yrs) \$6,000 training & coaching, 1 time cost
 - Expected Impact: Reduction in discipline disproportionality index by ≥ 0.15 ; achieve Falcon Way Tier 1 Fidelity Inventory score $\geq 70\%$
- Enhance project-based learning with “Deeper Learning” - acquire knowledge and apply it in new situations, develop critical thinking, and connect learning to real-world contexts. Pilot starting in 9th grade cohort. Year 1: \$30,000
 - Expected Impact: 8-10 percentage point AP pass in project-aligned course, +1 day attendance per student, stronger student reported relevance, long term 95% graduation, 92% persistence

CRLS Tier 2 School Performance Improvement Plan (to begin July 2026)

- EveryDay Intervention - automated attendance nudges to at-risk students and families (\$31,000)
 - Expected Impact: Decrease chronic absenteeism 5-7 days in year 1 (+1 day average attendance)
- Attendance Works - coaching for staff (\$10,000)
 - Expected Impact: 2-4 pts ↓absenteeism reduction, ~24% fewer absences among visited students and stronger family-school trust
- Parent-Teacher Home Visits + Biliterate staff follow up - Strength-based fall & winter home visits followed by goal-setting texts/calls; relationship-centered, culturally responsive approach if nudges are not enough (training + teacher visit stipends: \$9,600 in year 1, \$8,000 in year 2)
 - Expected Impact: 60+ students reach proficiency by spring 2027 (+0.28↑ standard deviations math scores)
- High-Dosage Tutoring (Saga model) - daily 45 min/day with 1:2 student ratio for students more than 1 year behind grade level. (\$375,000 for 150 students x \$2,500)

CRLS Tier 3 School Performance Improvement Plan (to begin July 2026)

- Comprehensive School-Based DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) - weekly 60-minute skills groups plus individual coaching for high-risk students with emotional regulation challenges. (\$16,000 year 1 and \$2,000 training)
 - Expected Impact: Multi-site high school studies show 30–40% reductions in crisis referrals and a 0.3 GPA increase.
- CBITS (Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools) - ten 45-minute group sessions and parent modules to students exposed to trauma,

reducing PTSD symptoms and improving attendance (\$8,000 for year 1 and \$7,000 there after)

- Expected Impact: –25% PTSD symptom scores, –1–2 days chronic absenteeism per participant
- Check & Connect Mentoring - pairs students with trained mentors for weekly check-ins, data review, and home visits, targeting chronically absent or at-risk learners. (\$192,000 for 2 FTE mentors + benefits)
 - Expected Impact: 14–20 percentage points reductions in chronic absenteeism and improved credit accrual in urban districts.

Thrive Audit Results and School Performance

- The need for more support for chronically absent students, including early intervention and family engagement.
- Concerns about the correlation between socio-economic status and chronic absenteeism, suggesting targeted support for specific student groups.
- From the scratch pad: GREAT summary! I could not possibly comment during a meeting after seeing these for the first time, but it would be helpful to identify next steps and understand where CRLS goes from here with these recommendations. Surely, there needs to be priorities on these recommendations, or does CRLS have the bandwidth (and SIP funds?) to implement all?

CRLS has existing partners that can be asked to work towards addressing the issues identified in the report instead of using funds to pay for something new.
[Nina Nolan]

Chronic Absenteeism and Support Needs

- The ongoing issue of chronic absenteeism, noting that while some progress has been made, much more is needed.
- The importance of additional supports and collaboration with families to address absenteeism further.
- The need for a vetting process when considering specific pay-to-play options recommended by consultants.
- Some schools have had success with certain products, but effectiveness varies.
- The need for immediate intervention and support systems within schools to address behavioral and mental health issues.

School Community Partnerships and Utilization of Existing Tools

- The need for more school community partnerships to address various issues.
- Use the Community Partner Portal as a tool for schools and community programs to communicate about students.

- Utilize existing tools and relationships within the community to support students.

Tier One and Tier Two Support Systems

Tier One and Tier Two support systems needed to address day-to-day issues that can negatively impact students, including early warning indicator meetings in creating a supportive community and increase teach

- Use empty classrooms for the intervention space.
- Community members, especially for mental health support, could be asked to help reduce the burden on social workers.
- From the scratch pad: Question raised about piloting Tier 2 and 3 *Process room* ([Lily's reference here](#)), and could this be piloted next year. Could this start sooner as a one month pilot in June?

Parent/Caregiver-Teacher Conferences

Current status (reflecting on mid-March conferences)

- Booking conferences (10 days lead time given)
- March 12-13 (announced March 3 newsletter; link provided in letter)

Current format

- Length: 10 minutes with 5 minutes between each appointment
- Format: In-person (in teacher's classroom), phone, or video conferencing
- Dates and Times: Tuesday, March 11 | 12:30 - 3PM (afternoon); Wednesday, March 12 | 8:30 - 11AM (morning); Thursday, March 13 | 6 - 8PM (evening)
- Unclear if students can/should attend

Attendee Comments and Suggestions:

- Identify goals for parent-teacher conferences and potential changes to the current format.
- Mandate student attendance at conferences to involve them in their own academic success and growth areas.
- Involve students in their own education is beneficial and should be considered as a new norm.
- From the scratch pad: As a 9th grade parent, I was surprised that I could only schedule time with one out of four teachers during Spring parent - teacher conferences. Would it be feasible to try to reach more parents in the Spring, and ensure that where this is a year long class, parents do not book time slots for both Fall and Spring? I am thinking out loud of ways to accommodate more parents across the two days. I recognize that given the classroom size, it's

impossible for teachers to meet with every single parent during the two days that are allotted. However, it would also help how to schedule time outside of the conference days (e.g., what time windows work best for our teachers?). I didn't need to meet with all teachers, but it would have been nice to touch base with more than one.

- From the scratch pad: Jamie Lichtenstein- I find the 10 minute conference time is typically too short if there are any issues to discuss. I have had problems getting a conference at a time that works for me. Some teachers don't offer all 3 time slots. Overall I like that I can meet with every teacher which is a huge improvement over upper school. Even 15 minutes would be better but it might make getting a conference harder.
- From the scratch pad: Lisa Downing -- I like for it to be clearer if the class is co-taught if you should schedule with both teachers if you want to meet with both. I have had it where I schedule with one and both come (my preference) and I've had it where I schedule with the gen ed teacher and the special educator comes and the gen ed teacher doesn't come (not great). I've also had it where the special educator reaches out to schedule a separate meeting. Overall, I think it is important to meet with both teachers but often this doesn't happen.
- From the scratch pad: [Cullen Buie] I think the purpose of the parent/teacher conferences should be to (1) allow caregivers/parents to build or begin a relationship with their student's teachers, (2) help caregivers/parents and teachers collaborate on the success of the student. Given the number of classes students take, and the workload of teachers, I think 10 minutes is actually fine for this. If a student doesn't need much support then they can still meet and just form a quick connection. If a student needs more support, 10 minutes isn't enough to 'solve' an issue but it is enough to identify that one exists and make a plan for how to follow up (IMO).
- From the scratch pad: (Rachel G): the conference should be with students to discuss their academic progress. I am not sure why we still invite caregivers. As a parent, I have my sons' teachers meet with them to discuss the situation and make a plan. It is the student's name on the diploma.
- From the scratch pad: [Nina Nolan] I use the time to get to know my child's teachers and understand how I can best support my child while they're in the class. An improvement I see is to have my child there to understand that the parent has a role in their education but I know it's hard to do that (child wants to enjoy the free time.) Also, just want to say that I schedule time for my child and I to meet with their guidance counselor for that one on one time.
- From the scratch pad: [Jasper Caravan] It would be much better if it was clear whether/not students were intended to go to conferences. From my personal experience, I've had much clearer expectations of what I needed to do and

better experiences in the classroom when I've attended conferences, but I understand that some teachers might not want students there.

- From the scratch pad: Goals: build relationships with teacher, get an inside view into what my special ed child is faring in class, it's good for him to hear positives from teacher as he has low self confidence.
- From the scratch pad: In person navigation of school is too hard.

Challenges and Solutions for Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Boost awareness of students' mental health and behavioral needs.
- An attendee shared their experience in New York City public schools, where they ran a Tier Two intervention space called a process room: A non-punitive space staffed by general educators for both behavioral and academic interventions that can help students who are having a bad day and need immediate support.

Opportunity Gap and Tiered Intervention

- A daily intervention space is needed for students who are not in a healthy state to be in class, affecting other students' learning.
- The lack of a tier two intervention space available on a daily basis, which is needed to bridge the gap between tier one and tier three interventions, and that the absence of a tier two intervention space leads students to skip school, exacerbating absenteeism.
- Data disaggregation is not happening at the school level, making it difficult to track the effectiveness of interventions.

Proposal for Tier Two Intervention

- What is the cost and feasibility of implementing a tier two intervention program?
- A general educator, not a special educator, is needed for this tier two intervention, and provides a budget proposal, which has been submitted to the school committee and CRS administration multiple times but has not received a response.
- Staffing options to minimize budget impact could include using staff with gaps in their schedules.

Potential Staffing and Budget Considerations

- Use funds for staffing has been avoided in the SIP, but worth exploring. A special education parent notes that their son is required to attend IEP meetings but not parent-teacher conferences.
- The lack of student involvement in parent-teacher conferences is due to a lack of communication and expectation.
- The normalization of not involving students in parent-teacher conferences, especially at the high school level.

- Rework the conferences to include students.
- Logistical Considerations and Improvements
- Take inspiration from the Somerville Public Schools, including scheduling interpreters and holding conferences in the cafeteria.
- Hold conferences in the cafeteria or on the same floor to reduce logistical challenges.
- Tap into family engagement time for families that need more time due to interpreters.

Community Topics (your ideas)

Final Thoughts and Next Steps

- Acknowledge feedback and suggests pausing the next month's meeting to see if it brings out more neighborhood participation.
- Examine the challenges of scheduling school events and improve communication and coordination (see Calendar Committee recommendations).
- From the scratch pad: I raised the issue with Ms Howard by email and at the Principal coffee in April that I was surprised to see an overlap with the CRLS School Council meeting and the CRLS Multicultural Night. Ms Howard said that this was club initiated. Our school should celebrate Multicultural Night, and if we had a centralized calendar and all school clubs and educators had access, this kind of overlap would not occur with these types of activities. Why should students, educators and parents/caregivers have to choose?! There are enough evenings during the year to accommodate both. I raise this, because it was nice to see another parent share the same sentiment in tonight's chat. The parent shared: *Jumping off to go back to the Ethiopian Affinity Group. I will continue to voice my disappointment that it was not considered that this meeting was happening in addition to the CRLS Multiculture Night. It's not right.*

Meeting Adjourned.

March 18, 2026 School Council Notes

In-person representatives: Allan Gately Gehant, Alex Bowers, Megan Laskarzewski, Tina Lieu, Cullen Buie

Other in-person attendees: Imogen, Acadia, Kevin Mundt, Josh Marden, Susie Van Blaricum, Anurag, Azaria, Declan, Jasper

Representatives on Zoom: Alysa Breyer, Casey C, Connor EpsteinKraus, Lily Read, Sunny Gupta, Nikki Sapienza

Others on Zoom: Tanya Milner, Tabithalee Howard, Anania, Casey, Danielle, Emma Hughes, Erik Scott, Sasha Featherspoons, Kris Dickson, Tanya Milner, Carroll Magill, Danielle, Emily Pollock, Jocelyn, Jodi, Kim Bostic-Williams, Rick Younger, Roshan Kumar, Sue Swalley

Note taker: Amanda Grice

Meeting info

- In-person at the Career & College Resource Center (CCRC) at CRLS (near the main entrance)
- Virtual on Zoom:
- <https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJKKkIYS5.1>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Agenda (times approximate)

- 6:00 - 6:05PM Announcements & Celebrations
- 6:05 - 6:25PM Subcommittee on Special Education
- 6:25 - 6:45PM Clubs (funding, creation/sunsetting)
- 6:40 - 7:15PM Subcommittee on Movement to Honors
- 7:15 - 7:35PM THRIVE! Report for CRLS
- 7:35 - 7:50PM AP exam prep and CRLS culture around AP & Honors
- 7:50 - 7:55PM Community Topics (your ideas)
- 7:55 - 8:00PM Closing



Agenda

[Agenda, Notes,](#)
[Slides link](#)



6:00 - 6:05PM	Announcements & Celebrations
6:05 - 6:25PM	Subcommittee on Special Education
6:25 - 6:40PM	Clubs (funding, creation/sunsetting)
6:45 - 7:15PM	Subcommittee on Movement to Honors
7:15 - 7:35PM	THRIVE! Report for CRLS
7:35 - 7:50PM	AP exam prep and CRLS culture around AP & Honors
7:50 - 7:55PM	Community Topics (your ideas)
7:55 - 8:00PM	Closing

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Celebrations and Announcements

Attendees, Please share announcements, your celebrations (personal or school related)



March 24 & 25: 10th grade ELA MCAS. Late start (12:20PM) for non-test takers; 12:20PM dismissal for test takers (postgrad students regular schedule)

March 25: Caregiver Academy (virtual 7-8PM): Focus on Attendance for 9th grade families

April 15: CRLS School Council meeting will be held at CSUS, in the multipurpose room (840 Cambridge St.) and on [Zoom](#) ([same link](#))

Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2026
Happening at CRLS in ~one week! It's anonymous and helps us understand your experiences, so please answer honestly!

CRLS School Council Election of Caregiver Representatives in May-June! Seeking two 9th or 10th grade caregivers to help run elections. 1-2 hours/week for 5-6 weeks. Contact rosie.jones@gmail.com

CRLS' festival theatre play "**Oh What A Tangled Web!**" passed round 1 in Middleborough and moved on to semi-finals.

We need your feedback!
Please take this survey to inform our discussion of School Council Locations [Take the Survey >>](#)



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Announcements & Celebrations

- March 24/25 Late start for MCAS 10th grade
- March 25th Caregiver academy
- Next SC meeting will be at CSUS in person

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey happening in a week
- Election for caregiver reps happening in May/June for school council – seeking two 9th and 10th grade caregivers to help with organizing caregiver elections
- CRLS Festival Theater play, “Oh What a Tangled Web” made it to semi’s but not finals
- May 19 Blood Drive
- Model UN, CRLS got an award

Special Education Subcommittee: Addressing...

1. Better inclusion of students with disabilities in school social life

- a. Some disabilities affect socialization skills & thus need MORE socialization opportunities
- b. High barriers to taking initiative to join clubs. How can clubs be more accessible/welcoming?
- c. Before/after school not accessible for students taking door-to-door transportation

2. Simple ways to make CRLS communications more disability friendly

3. Need for math options besides substantially separate* classrooms and honors math

- a. Math in substantially separate class not challenging enough for some
- b. Math in honors classes might be too challenging or not offer enough support for some

**Classrooms for students who need a higher level of support than is possible in a general education classroom; abbreviated “sub-separate”*

Subcommittee members: Kitty Breen, Casey Crosby, Sasha Featherspoons, Tina Lieu, Danielle McLaughlin, Kevin Mundt, Nicole Sapienza

Subcommittee on Special Education

The subcommittee gathered data on the inclusion of students with disabilities in student life that will be shared. Preliminary data noted that some disabilities make it harder for kids to socialize, transportation can be a barrier to before and after school activities, and there is a need to make clubs more accessible.

The group asked how to make clubs more welcoming and accessible, how to make it easier for kids to join a club? Could there be a club that could be less focused on disability like a volunteering club, like a club that helps to support dismantling barriers.

Question/suggestions:

- Could there be more groundwork/training through club membership to help support one another. For example, the hiking club made an intentional effort to ensure that a student with a disability could go on the overnight trip and that there was a welcoming space. Adults need to be involved to make sure that the club is safe (for anyone needing extra supports). Club members are happy to provide structure and a good time for all students.
- Ideas for outreach to new members
 - Clubs visit SCALE classrooms at CSUS and DVUS
 - Generally club membership falls off over the year and new members have a hard time joining (club week only 2x a year) so for accessibility, could post Google Classroom codes and overviews to let people know where clubs meet, etc.
 - Or could clubs make an “about us” video to let folks know what each club does.
- Could the tip sheet be part of the onboarding process for new club members?
- Have a system where there are two check-ins each year with club members.

Better Integrating Students with Disabilities in the Life of the School

To prepare for APT (assigned professional time) session, students were asked about spaces they felt more or less belonging, staff they felt more or less belonging with, and things they felt contributed to how they felt. This was focused on classroom/academic settings.

 Things that Contribute to Students Feeling More Belonging/ Motivate Them: • No noise* • Light lighting (less bright or no lights)* • Calm music in the background • Knowing I am safe • Access to a quiet place* • Extra time to think* • Options for how/where to sit • Being allowed to walk/move around • Being able to engage in interests/fun activities • Knowing what to expect and what is expected of them • Familiarity* • General vibes: nice, approachable, patient, interested, flexible • Feeling that they will have help if they make a mistake, non judgemental	 Things that Contribute to Students Feeling Less Belonging/ Cause them to “Shut Down”: • Loud noises* • Bright lights* • Feeling or being crowded/cluttered* • Limited options for where/how to sit • Not having friends in class* • Lack of familiarity* • Having to wait • Not being sure of what to expect* • Not having fun • Not knowing how to word things / social pressure • Too much talking/questions • Negative interactions • Feeling rushed/nagged • Strictness/inflexibility*
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**repeated by several students*

Disability Friendly Communications (help everyone!)

Events

- Clear agendas with time, accessibility information
- Live captioning via video conferencing or PowerPoint365 and Google Slides presentation mode
- Use microphones for speakers
- Use Lexend (dyslexia-friendly) font in slides
- Printouts **and** QR code to access documents electronically (for translation, text to speech...)

Digital Communications

- Alt text for images, charts, infographics, etc.
- Descriptive links (rather than "click here").
- Avoid flashing content or provide warning; make animations optional

Communications

- Use plain, concise language, avoid jargon
- Use Lexend font in emails
- Use of common terminology and concise language, not jargon
- Avoiding underlining and italics. Boldface important info
- 1.5 or double spacing for text
- Avoid too much information in one space.
- Use breaks in paragraphs to signify discrete information to be less overwhelming (avoid wall of text)
- Translatable forms of communication

How can we increase adoption?

An educator noted that generally more easily accessible information about clubs would be great.

In a recent Academically Productive Talk (APT) session shared information about how to create more safe and welcoming spaces for students with neurodiversity to increase belonging. Some of the primary ways to increase belonging were to be intentional around noise and lighting, people that you can be familiar with, welcoming space, knowing expectations. Things that were known to decrease the sense of belonging were the opposite: feeling overwhelmed, noisy, bright.

Bridging Substantially Separate and Honors Math

Issues:

Currently math move-up makes all honors space for Algebra 1 & Geometry in the spring semester for those courses.

Some students find Honors courses too challenging

Sub-Separate classes may not provide enough academic challenge, leaving Some students without a placement that fits their learning level.

Ask:

Consider returning general level course or instructional support between Honors and Sub-Separate classes to better accommodate students whose needs fall between these two options.

Expected Impact:

Adding another placement option would allow students to be placed in classes that better match their abilities. This could improve student engagement, confidence, and academic progress while ensuring that students receive the appropriate level of challenge and support.

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Bridging Separate Honors Math

There needs to be a middle ground because sub-separate classes may not provide enough academic challenge and honors might be too challenging. This discussion to be continued later in the all honors discussion.

CRLS Club Overview

82 Active Clubs & 5 Core Themes

- Academics
- Sports, Games, & Activities
- Service & Advocacy
- Language, Culture, & Identity
- Art

To maintain high standards and student engagement, the Extracurricular Committee (EC) monitors club activity.

This school year, the EC has **closed 3 inactive clubs** and is currently **reviewing 8 additional clubs** for potential closure at the end of the year.

Additionally, **4 new clubs** have been approved on a trial basis to ensure they sustain enough participation to continue into next year.

Clubs (funding, creation/sunsetting) slides 13-18

Current club status

- Principal Gately Gehant noted that there are 82 clubs representing 5 themes: academics, sports, games, activities, service and advocacy, language, culture and identity, art.
- Closed 3 inactive clubs and might potentially close 8 others due to attendance concerns
- 4 new clubs were approved this year

There is a limited budget for clubs so ongoing review is necessary to ensure funds are appropriately allocated/utilized

Starting a new club

- Google form to submit club proposal
- Need 15 committed members
- Need a staff member to serve as advisor
- Must have a unique purpose that doesn't already exist in a club (also considers distribution of existing clubs between the 5 themes)

- Ex. Boy scouts who wanted a club to do a blood drive were directed to HOSA (health occupation safety of America) club to work together

Club stipends are outlined in the Cambridge Educator Association contract. There is a 5 tier system for funding. Tiers can be increased or decreased as needed.

Club Advisor Stipends are outlined in CEA* Contract

1. Student Count	I	• 3-20 students 1 point • 21-40 students 2 points • 41+ students 3 points															
2. Student Contact Hours		• 1 - 36 hours 1 point • 37-50 hours 2 points • 51+ hours 3 points															
3. Advisor Planning Hours (outside of contractual day and/or club meeting time)		• 25+ hours 2 points															
4. Weekend or Night meetings/and or travel (outside of contractual day)		1-3 meetings/travel 1 point 4+ meetings/travel 2 points															
5. Final Tier Status & Payment Amount (determined by allocating points)		<table> <tr> <th>Tier</th><th>Points</th><th>Amounts</th></tr> <tr> <td>I</td><td>2</td><td>\$1000</td></tr> <tr> <td>II</td><td>3-4</td><td>\$2000</td></tr> <tr> <td>III</td><td>5-6</td><td>\$3000</td></tr> <tr> <td>IV</td><td>7+</td><td>\$4000</td></tr> </table>	Tier	Points	Amounts	I	2	\$1000	II	3-4	\$2000	III	5-6	\$3000	IV	7+	\$4000
Tier	Points	Amounts															
I	2	\$1000															
II	3-4	\$2000															
III	5-6	\$3000															
IV	7+	\$4000															

*CEA: Cambridge Educator Association (educator union)

An advisor cannot be paid for club hours during school hours, so although they are not barred from holding a club meeting during the school day (e.g., Lunch time, WIN block), they can't be paid for it.

Participatory Budget Update (SY 25-26)

CRLS is currently utilizing a **three-year, \$150,000 grant fund** designed to enhance the club experience and expand student impact on the Cambridge community. This funding prioritizes new clubs and those not currently funded by the school to support community service, events, and civic engagement.

Completed Awards

The following 14 clubs have already utilized their granted funds:

- **Latin Club:** Transportation to the Brown University Carol Festival.
- **Morning Basketball Association & Volleyball Club:** New balls and storage bags.
- **Ceramics & D&D Clubs:** Specialized supplies (clay, dice, and mini-figures).
- **Model UN & Mock Trial:** Transportation for competitions in NYC and Chelsea District Court.
- **Pan Asian Club:** New ping-pong table.
- **Squash Club:** Uniforms and court rental fees.
- **Yearbook Club:** Digital cameras for candid photography.
- **Hiking Club:** Lodging for a field trip in New Hampshire.
- **Ski Club:** Transportation for trips to Waterville Valley.
- **Club 4:** Groceries for cooking at a Harvard Square shelter.
- **Class of 2028:** Fundraising supplies.

Last year CRLS was provided \$150k in grant funding through the Cambridge Participatory Budget to enhance the club experience. Funds distributed have been geared towards new clubs and clubs that don't have a big budget.

Projects being funded include: Cultural events, STEM and Career, Educational Speakers, Community

A community member noted that there have been a few times over the last year where over 30 students have shown interest in Public Health. Those students were directed to HOSA. There are community partners who are willing to advise if the club were an option.

A parent asked about the distribution of membership? Is it pretty flat? Are there 100 students in 5 clubs?

- Model UN 80-90 kids
- Islamic studies club regularly 50
- Some are just 10
- Dungeons & Dragons are small but committed

And what percentage of the student body are not in clubs?

Principal Gately Gehant said that used to be done, but it hasn't recently. They are not sure but that would be great to know. Have not looked at that data.

Athletics for example has 700 students signed up for the spring season.

Online question: teachers can't do clubs during the school day because it's not in their contract? Is that correct?

Principal Gately Gehant confirmed that being paid for club work during the school day is not in the teacher's contract. Clubs can meet during WIN block, but not get paid.

Do all of the clubs know about the funding options? Yes, Mrs. Milner has created a handbook for the clubs, she meets with them, and she has sent emails to let them know about the funding and fundraising options. The fundraising can be tough because they can only accept cash or checks (due to city guidelines).

Student: There are a lot of situations where groups in school meet and do club stuff but don't get designated as clubs. Also, the process of getting funding can be complicated. When it comes to getting funding, the decisions, the process, the use of the funds is complex with limited transparency. Increased transparency into the process for students would be a big help.

Is the funding rolling funding?

Two deadlines for funding (in Google Form): Accept proposals for semester 2 in semester 1 and in semester 2 for following school year.

Is it possible for teacher/educator to pair with an employee to have a lunchtime club?

Yeah, and there is best buddies (has met at lunch time) that tries to bring people together but would love to talk more about that.

CRLS Junior - Leader of a club at CRLS): It's important to note that the club leaders themselves likely need their lunch and WIN block time, as that was implemented for them to eat and get the educational support they need. I would be cautious of creating an expectation that we meet during this time.

Educator/club advisor: Seems that the process has been much easier, shout out to Mikayla Galvin for making the process much easier. This year feels more successful. The City is the barrier to electronic fundraising (e.g. Venmo, Paypal).

Prior to this school year with the participatory budget coming in, the money was not really available and clubs were relying on fundraising. Once the PB money is gone, it's gone, so clubs need to remain comfortable with fundraising.

Student: The requirements for clubs such as out of state competition were very unclear despite early notice in December for a February competition. 48 hour prior travel permit is in the rules. It's important that advisors attend to the handbook.

10th Grade Critical Issues in U.S. History (CIUSH)

2025-26 Status

- All students taught in a heterogenous classroom, doing same work
- Only students earning B+ or higher given honors designation on transcript

2026-27 New Status

- All students taught in a heterogenous classroom, doing same work
- All students will have the Honors designation on their transcript

Critical Issues in US History is in the process of a curriculum review cycle to ensure content and rigor are horizontally aligned across grade 10, vertically aligned within CPS history curriculum, and appropriately prepares students for higher level coursework and post-secondary life including civic engagement.

Author: Susie Van Blaricum, Interim Dean of Curriculum for History and Social Studies

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Subcommittee on Movement to Honors (slides 19-38)

Next year Critical issues in US History (10th grade) will be an honors course so all students will get honors credit (if they pass). Under the current “earned honors” model, there are demographic data issues with which kids are getting honors; which match all of the other classes. “Earned honors” students are doing the same work as those who don’t earn honors. Also, the new “all honors” would be the same mix of students as currently.

Longitudinal CIUSH Grade and Honors designation data

Across the past three years...

	Count	% Honors	% Non-Honors
Total Students in CIUSH	1283	63.60%	36.40%
White and Asian students	728	78.98%	21.02%
Black, Latinx, and multi-race students	555	43.42%	56.58%

These numbers have held steady over the past three years without seeing an increase students of color receiving honors credit, *despite all students doing the same work.*

Author: Susie Van Blaricum, Interim Dean of Curriculum for History and Social Studies

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Educator noted that there are issues that were being raised in the staff survey (slide below). For example, honors loses all meaning when everyone takes the same classes, does it address the achievement gap, does it force students into a pace that might not match their achievement level?

Educator Concerns

Meaning of "Honors": Loses meaning, watered down curriculum, and possibly intensifies "flight" to AP classes.

Student Readiness and Pace:

A major concern is students unprepared for pace of honors, especial those with learning disabilities, IEPs, or significant skill gaps.

Results: hurts academic confidence & leads to a denial of necessary services.

Support and Resources:

How will teachers be supported and trained (e.g., co-teaching, smaller class sizes, and time for differentiated planning)

Equity and Achievement Gap: Is move to "all-honors" performative? Fear it does not genuinely address the achievement gap, and could disproportionately harm special education, multilingual learner, substantially separate student populations

Alternative Options and Differentiation:

"one-size-fits-all" honors model removes options for students who require a slower pace or different type of class. How can differentiation can be achieved across such a wide range of abilities?

Survey data collected by educator Ms. Lily Rayman-Read

Administrator noted that there have been professional development opportunities for educators focused on teaching heterogenous classes. Also, that we should challenge the conversation around separating kids who are experiencing challenges versus giving them extra support.

Caregiver question: Are there extra supports being added to the class even though there aren't extra staff?

Educator: working systematically to think about how to add that.

Student: unclear how calling everything honors makes anything honors?

Educator: honors means offering the most rigorous coursework as opposed to some people being able to do it while others can't. In Critical Issues for example, the expectation is honors but students are not all receiving honors credit.

Parent: It seems there is a core curriculum, and then there is an opportunity to go deeper (honors). The teachers have to teach the core, but then the students who complete that core curriculum are then waiting for others to complete the core to be challenged. Believes that some students don't like certain topics and their grades reflect that.

Caregiver: How do you determine if a curriculum is honors level?

Educator: The current critical issues class is honors because it gives honors credit.

Student: there was not a set curriculum in the critical issues class when [the student] took it.

Educator: There is not a traditional textbook but there is an outline and there is work being done to align the curriculum. History department just had a day together to better align so that regardless of which class you take, you are getting a similar experience (e.g, which texts do we want all kids to be exposed to). Will continue with another day away and the summer into August to think about further alignment.

From an English teacher's perspective:

- 9 years ago was the last “college prep” and “honors class at CRLS
- After level up the next year it was night and day because there was support from special education for heterogeneous classes and there wasn't a stigma attached to some students.
- That curriculum was built from the ground up what was considered to be honors level. It wasn't equitable that all kids were doing the work but not getting the honors credit.
- It seems like there needs to be more conversation around how the classes are being supported and how the curriculum is being developed.
- He has taught the HN curr since level up and has had success w/it. So need to have those conversations and do the work. And needs thoughtfulness to how classes are being supported

Caregiver: This slide [ CRLS School Council Notes SY2526 showing a disparity by race in outcomes of the current earned honors Critical Issues class] is problematic. The statistics should not stay this way whether it's called honors or not honors.

Special Education Concerns

Special Education Concerns

Some 9th graders arriving at CRLS are underprepared due to not receiving needed support in heterogeneous classrooms K-8.

Strong pedagogy and targeted interventions move the needle

Example:

Putnam Ave Upper School had multiple math & reading interventionists looking at data every staff meeting to figure out how to help academically struggling students.

Previously MCAS scores were cited as being part of the reason why we were moving to honors math; but the way the needle has been moved before (at Putnam Ave for example) has been more with focus on looking at the data frequently and focused interventions and strong pedagogy.

If “all honors” is the goal, then there needs to be a look at the data and targeted interventions. Also need to ensure a strong focus on decreasing the disparities that exist for students on IEP, and students from marginalized populations.

1) What is the Move-up Model?

Students who start in our Algebra 1A course will:

REVIEW
pre-requisite skills/concepts & standards
which are directly
tied to Algebra 1 Standards

PREVIEW
prioritized skills/concepts & standards
which are directly tied to Algebra 1 Standards
as well as Higher level math standards

Semester 2: transition to an Algebra 1 Honors course.

- A. **Stay with their Algebra 1A teacher(s)** to maintain relationships and provide consistency for educator & student.
 - a. The Algebra 1A space will transition to an Algebra 1 Honors space with “traditional Honors students being onboarded into the class.”
- B. **Or, transition to a new Algebra 1 Honors space**, new teachers and new “traditional” students.

We are continuing to iterate and reflect on how we are considering student voice as well as educator expertise in this process

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2) Why shift to all honors now? For equity

Full year students -- often marginalized groups -- not achieving/reaching higher level math

Enrollment (slides 8-49): Historical enrollment in Non-Honors spaces have been decreasing leaving spaces highly concentrated (IEP/504, High Needs, etc.)

Especially important as overall enrollment in Algebra 1 Non-honors declines & some students selectively being moved up

Percentage of students from non-honors Algebra 1 course enrolled in CRLS higher level math classes:

- **Overall Student Body:** Precalculus (<12%), AP Math course (<6%), Calculus (<3.5%)
- **Students of Color:** Precalculus (<5.3%), AP Math course (<2.4%), Calculus (<1%)

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics & Research Backed:

- Detracking Dissertation - Jack Ballard
- Catalyzing Change - Chapter 3: Creating Equitable Structures Reasons to detrack math and detrack math teachers

Student Pathway Data (the courses full year math course students took later)

Student Achievement on MCAS:

- Historical Achievement (FY | MU | H+)
 - ~85% Full year Algebra 1 course scored Partially Meeting or Not Meeting (<500) on MCAS.

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Educator:

Math Move-Up Data; current curriculum is failing most marginalized student. If we just maintain where we are at, it feels like we aren't doing our job as teachers.

Changes to full year math (Algebra 1, Geometry): The full year of math is not going away, but Algebra 1A instead of teaching the first half of the curriculum is changing to allow students the opportunity to review pre-req skills and preview the whole curriculum. In 2nd semester, the students will be split between two classrooms to decrease having a high concentration of marginalized students in full year math classes (e.g., in a class of 24, 16 are on IEPs). Some will move to a different teacher and those who need to keep the relationship will stay with the same teacher.

In the past when teachers selectively moved up (Algebra 1A) students to honors who were doing well or on the borderline, the level of need in Algebra 1B was yet more concentrated.

Why the shift to all honors? Equity.

We are trying to raise the floor for those most marginalized students, who are being left in spaces where they can't succeed in higher level math.

Instead of asking how we move students up, we should reframe the conversation to, how do we choose the students who stay behind? Should we have MLL students move up with MLL teachers to bridge that gap?

Raise the floor **DON'T** create a ceiling

Calculus Project Model: *Cohort students & Preview Content*

Studies have shown that high school students increase their chances of finishing college by a factor of more than 3 to 1 with each level of math education they complete, from algebra through calculus. This link between math success and college completion is consistent across race, ethnicity, and socio-economic levels, suggesting that math preparation could be a powerful route to overcoming educational disparities.

- <https://thecalculusproject.org/what-we-do/>

Interviews with recent graduates
(class of 2025)

- Where are you now?
 - UMASS Lowell - studying finance
- Are you taking Math now?
 - Yes, but just had to drop precalculus. Will plan on taking next year
- How was your experience at CRLS?
 - Varied by space, (took FY Alg 1 ~ B+, H Geo ~ D+, Alg 2 ~ B, Personal Finance ~ C, Stats & Probability ~ B+)
 - Got an amazing internship between Junior & Senior year working for a Venture Capital firm

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Calculus Project Model: Cohort Students and Preview Content

There needs to be more/better communication around the placement for math.

Strategies to support teachers meet the move to all honors

- Modules for staff support this year: teaching in heterogeneous classrooms
- Doing peer observations (teachers see each other and other classes)

3) Current work with educators (Math specific & whole school)

Math-specific Support:

- Multiple Staff on Assignment* days
- Common planning time meetings
- Peer observations & co-planning tasks
- Purposeful rostering into Sem2 (to create truly heterogeneous spaces)
- Benchmark data collections (assessments, enrollment, MCAS)
- Curriculum reviews and calibration
- Better support around placement process to support Rising 9th and Rising 10th graders around the purpose of Algebra 1A and Geometry A spaces.

* Staff on Assignment → Full Day PD during school day

CRLS Staff Support:

- Modules for School Year (SY) 2024-25
 - Teaching in the Block
 - Teaching All Students
- Modules for School Year (SY) 2025-26
 - Teaching in Heterogeneous Classes

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Implementation & Collaborative work:

Staff PD Days

SY2024-25 **Algebra 1** had 3 full day **Staff on Assignment Days (SOA; full day professional development)** to prepare and support the work. **Geometry team also had an SOA day** at the end of the year to prepare for the incoming group on Honors Geometry students.

SY2025-26 **Algebra 1 and Geometry teams both have 3 full day SOA days** scheduled and there will be an end of the year day for the Algebra 2 teachers.

Purposeful Rostering

A major component of the Move-up Process is **ensuring that our second semester spaces are more evenly distributed and heterogeneous**. With the major goal being **dropping IEP (special education) ratios from 60-70% to 30-40%**. By merging our move-up students with honors students in the second semester we can guarantee this better distribution of student needs allowing for staff to better meet the needs of all their students.

We also take into consideration; gender, race, and student achievement in Algebra 1A spaces to guide the rostering conversations.

***Important note - we are continuing to work on communicating with students and families that Algebra 1A → Algebra 1 Honors does not guarantee that students will have the same Algebra 1 teacher all year. We of course prioritize students who need consistency and strong teacher-student relationships.**

Implementation & Collaborative work (continued):

Data Analysis	Looked at historical student achievement. Looked at student achievement throughout the move-up process. Looked at student voice/feedback on the process and their experience throughout the move-up.
Peer Observations	In SY2025-26 we have begun working to create more consistency across our classes, both horizontally and vertically. Teams are co-observing and during Staff on Assignment days I have worked to position teams to visit math classes students are coming from or going to. - That is, Algebra 1 teachers observed Geometry spaces, and will be observing 8th grade Upper School spaces.
Curriculum reviews	Identified priority standards for Algebra 1 and Geometry - to better support Algebra 1A and Geometry A spaces & Competency Determination
Additional Student Supports	- EDIA (Individualized Student 'Intervention' Support) - Push-in staff support into math sections (especially with larger cohorts of students from specific subgroups ~ multilingual learner)

Will not remove the full year math option

By focusing on redistributing and making the spaces more heterogenous spaces hoping to allow the special education teachers to have more time to focus on meeting the students needs.

Staff support is an important lever to pull when talking about interventions, but not over support.

4) Maintaining High Expectations for all

Historic outcomes for Move-up students

Pathway: Students who Move-up “during the school year” **have a higher likelihood of finding success & staying in honors spaces.**

MCAS: Average growth on MCAS for **Move-up Students consistently ABOVE average.**

- *Students who have “moved-up” over the summer had significantly LOWER Average growth.*

How we are ensuring high standards:

- Algebra 1 Honors Assessments, Midterms & Finals
- Algebra 1 Honors Curriculum & Practices
- *Appropriate levels of support BUT not over-supporting*
- Continual Growth to maintain high standards:
 - Prioritized standards work
 - Iterative development of Algebra 1A and Geometry A spaces
 - First half of course vs. Review pre-reqs & preview prioritized standards

Honors is about maintaining high expectations for all, keeping folks on a forward pathway. The students who have moved up have stayed up; students who move up during the school year have a higher average than those who move up [by doing course work] during the summer.

MCAS Growth Comparison of Algebra 1 vs. Move Up vs. H+

Class of...	Total Students	Ave MCAS Growth	*FY 9th Average Growth	FY 10th Average Growth	*MU 9th Average Growth #ss	MU Summer Ave Growth	MU 10th Average Growth	*H+ 9th Average Growth	H+ 10th Average Growth
2025	463	52	51.8	56.7	63.7	20.3	72.5	53.0	51.8
2026	503	50	52.5	54.9	61.4	18.0	52.7	49.4	52.5
2027	515	60	53.4	57.2	66.8	20.9	34.3	61.9	53.4
2028									

AVERAGE Student growth according to the mathematics classes they experienced:

- Students were coded FY 9th grade if they were in Non-Honors Algebra 1 (not included Subsep)
- Students were coded FY 10th grade if they were in Non-Honors Geometry (not including Subsep)
- Students were coded MU 9th grade if they moved up from Algebra 1 Non-Honors to Algebra 1 Honors
- Students were coded MU Summer if they moved up from Algebra 1 Non-Honors to Geometry Honors from 9th to 10th grade*
- Students were coded MU 10th grade if they moved up from Geometry Non-Honors to Geometry Honors
- Students were coded H+ 9th grade if they were placed into Algebra 1 Honors OR a Higher level math class.
- Students were coded H+ 10th grade if they started 10th grade in Geometry Honors OR a Higher level math class.

*FY= full year, MU = move-up, SS#=Number of Students, H+ = students in Honors or higher level math, Subsep = substantially separate classrooms

5) Student supports (Tier 2*)

Student Supports INSIDE the classroom:

Complex Instruction:

- Group/peer learning
- Assigning competencies

EDIA:

- Personalized practice problems
- AI Chat "tutor" to support learning
 - Focused on **LEARNING** not getting the answer.
- Continued growth, students relationship w/AI and wanting answer vs. support.

We have been collecting student feedback quarterly to identify needs

Student Supports OUTSIDE the classroom:

CSV Tutoring: <https://www.csvinc.org/>

- Drop in Math
- 1-on-1 and group tutoring
- Peer tutoring

MIT/Partnership STEM tutoring: *Looking at MIT / Tufts / Harvard / partnership for tutoring CRLS students.*

Math Club peer support: *Working to create stronger connection.*

*Tier 2 = targeted interventions (academic help)

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EDIA - a way for staff to give add'l practice to kids with an AI chatbot tutor

For multilingual learners (MLL), working with Vera duarte so that the kids moving to honors move with the MLL teacher, or if moving from substantially separate classroom to the Honors space to move with the subseparate teacher to provide more interventions. Staff support still isn't a magic bullet.

Want to make sure make sure to give kids who can, the chance to take honors if they start as full year math.

6) Accountability / Benchmarks

Student course enrollment & Achievement

Student enrollment in higher level math courses AND in Honors Level Math courses.

- The 1st cohort (Class of 2028) had 107 students who started in Algebra 1A
→ 25 students Geometry A.
 - *keeping an eye on Algebra 2 requests*
- The 2nd cohort (Class of 2029) had 92 students who started in Algebra 1A
→ 35 students **requested** Geometry A

Student Achievement (Grades & Final Exam).

- Lots of variability currently in grading, but more consistency with Midterm/Finals

MCAS (Slides 65-93)

Historically (Class of 2025, 2026, 2027)

Move-up students achievement on MCAS is:

- Move-up Math in 9th grade (alg 1):
 - **Meeting ~ 37%**
 - **Partially Meeting ~ 61%**
 - **Not Meeting ~ 2%**
- Move-up Math in 10th grade (Geo):
 - **Meeting ~ 44%**
 - **Partially Meeting ~ 52%**
 - **Not Meeting ~ 4%**

Important to note these were much smaller "Move-up Cohorts"

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From the scratch pad: *I question whether students who have been moving up in algebra 1 between fall and spring are representative of the general student population in those full year algebra classes. I just caution against assuming that all students will be successful making that move and we should closely track how move up is working when applied across the board and revisit that data in 2-3 years.*

[POSTPONED TO NEXT MONTH] **THRIVE! Report for CRLS**

AP exam prep and CRLS culture around AP & Honors

AP Exam Prep

- CRLS is not funding AP prep sessions this year
- Impact: NO review sessions over April break
- CRLS is not allowing for late testing, despite the 4 snow days (there is precedent for this)
- Combination of snow days and no paid tutoring raising concerns about exam preparedness for spring semester AP classes

	Tutoring Hours	Average Score	Year
Teacher 1	20	3.09	2022
	20	2.74	2023
	15	3.32	2024
Teacher 2	20	3.42	2022
	20	3.66	2023
	15	2.67	2024
	5	2.91	2025
Teacher 3	0	3.85	2022
	0	3.3	2023
	0	3.38	2024
	0	3.71	2025
Teacher 4	0	3.4	2025

	Tutoring Hours	Average Score	Year
Teacher 5	20	4.03	2022
	20	3.86	2023
	15	3.51	2024
	5	4	2025
Teacher 6	0	4.36	2022
	0	4.36	2023
Teacher 7	0	3.17	2022
	0	3.6	2023
Teacher 8	0	4	2024
	0	4.13	2025
Teacher 9	0	3.39	2024
	0	4.56	2025

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Educator:

For the first time CRLS is not funding prep sessions for AP exams. Last year teachers were paid for less prep.

Issue: Full AP curriculum (for 2nd semester AP classes) won't be covered in time for tests due to snow days, and teachers will not be paid for AP exam prep.

Teachers requested a late AP test date for students but have not yet been granted that. Many students are not prepared for the AP exams. Some teachers will still offer April break prep sessions even though they won't get paid for it.

Some teachers decided not to teach AP courses this year because they felt the amount of unpaid out of school time required to do so is untenable and the semester is difficult for AP, especially in the spring.

Principal Gately Gehant noted that the hours for AP prep were cut in part due to the difficulty linking data showing a correlation between increased prep tutoring hours and increased AP test scores. Even as prep hours were cut, students are still showing higher scores.

Educators noted that content based exams require much different prep than skill based exams.

Student noted that the semester system where you can take one AP exam per semester, not having review sessions in some instances, leaves them less prepared.

There was also a delay when teachers were told there would be no tutoring hours until January; after most folks thought there would be.

Student: Some kids who don't feel prepared won't take the test. Teacher tutoring sessions are really helpful. Students studying on their own takes many more hours

Administrator: We are talking about moving resources to tutor the -- often strongest students -- AP students, but thought also has to be given to the need for students to have support on the core curriculum. Just to highlight the limited available resources.

Student: Support the [administrator] view that MCAS scores could be better supported considering district funding.

Educator, as a point of clarification, AP prep is not tutoring, this is teaching time teachers need to cover the content that is covered on the AP test. So this is content that teachers need to get to students one way or another.

[POSTPONED TO NEXT MONTH] Community Topics

From the scratchpad: Messaging to current 8th grade families about course level choices for math is different than messaging at CRLS school council meetings and anecdotally inconsistent across upper schools. We have heard from families that feel like their child made the wrong choice due to poor messaging. It would help to make sure upper school guidance counselors get more training on course choices.

February 25, 2026 SC Notes

In-person representatives: Allan Gately Gehant, Alex Bowers

Other in-person attendees - Carroll Magill, Jamie Lichenstein, Isabella Ehrlich, Azaria, Anurag, Forrester, Marvi, Zack

Representatives on Zoom: Alysa Breyer, Connor Epsteinkraus, Lianne Fisman, Lily Rayman-Read, Nina Nolan, Sarah

Others on Zoom: Tabithalee Howard, Anania, Elizabeth Hudson, Emily Pollock, Iyla, Luisa, de Paula Santos, Jasper, Jodi Ekelchik, Kim Bostic-Williams, Lisa Downing, Noah, Rich Younger, Samuel, Sue Swalley, Vivian Pales, Zanny

Note taker: Nina Farouk

Meeting info

- In-person at the Career & College Resource Center (CCRC) at CRLS (near the main entrance)
- Virtual on Zoom:
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJkKkIYS5.1>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Announcements:

- SC looking for feedback for location of future School Council meetings. [Link to survey](#).
- SY2026-2027 course selection starts the week after break. Please have conversations at home about course choices.
- Winter sports teams are transitioning into the playoffs: Boys basketball, Indoor Track and Field, and Wrestling all have athletes advancing.

Subcommittee on Honors

Subcommittee members: Alex Bowers, Kitty Breen, Lily Rayman-Read

Subcommittee on Honors - Class Descriptions

Heterogeneous Classroom	Students are at multiple levels of academic skill
Level Up	ELA/History combined 9th grade full year class, with three dedicated teachers assigned to address students' specific needs (not all sections have 3 teachers as was originally designed)
Math "Move Up"	Non-Honors (first semester) followed by Honors (second semester); implementation may vary
Earned Honors and Honors Option (Heterogeneous Classroom)	Earned Honors: Students with final grades of B+ receive HN Honors Option: Students who complete different/additional work earn HN
All Honors	Class is offered as Honors only (no non-honors level class is offered)

Subcommittee on Honors - History 1/2

Next Year	Change <u>Critical Issues in United States History</u> course to All Honors, eliminating earned-Honors level classes
Current	Critical Issues class is Earned Honors (B+ or higher awarded Honors)
Rationale	• Honors classes often act as a gatekeeper, discouraging students enrolled in non-Honors classes from pursuing advanced courses • Impact on students who do the work but aren't awarded Honors • Data shows a racial divide: students who don't earn Honors internalize stigma, reinforces achievement gap • All 9th graders take Honors history, why follow with a non-Honors class? • Enable every student to complete an internship, AP class, or early college class before graduation ◦ Note: AP U.S. History (year-long, invite-only) enrolled <u>75</u> 10th graders (3 sections) this year; anticipate enrolling <u>100</u> 10th graders (4 sections) next year

*These changes do not apply to Multilingual Learner (MLL) or Substantially Separate Classroom programs.

Subcommittee on Honors - History 2/2

Implementation

- Develop strategies to support students (staffing needs, vertical and horizontal alignment across all grade teams)
- Determine educator staffing and skills sets needed to support all students (see 9th grade Honors classes support)
- Promote professional development in heterogeneous classroom best practices so all students master content and engage in discussion (develop model lessons, differential assignments tailored to student abilities/interests/vocabulary)
- Examine assessments used by educators, analyze data focusing on areas students may struggle with (reading, writing, content skills)

Data Review

- **Demographic Achievement Gap**
Across the last 3 years of CIUSH students, 79% of White and Asian students have received honors credit, whereas Black and Latino students have received honors credit at a rate of 46%. These percentages have held steady across the last three years with negligible change.
- **Student Skills Assessment**
Ongoing: Examine common writing assessment data of 9th and 10th graders skills (same rubric) to ensure appropriate rigor and skill growth across grade levels

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History All-Honors (All-HN) Discussion

What determines invitation to AP classes?

- Teacher recommendations and students scores
- In 2024, SC was asked about the selection criteria for APUSH; APUSH course section established for historically underserved population. [Link to the 2024 response to SC.](#)
- Lily Raymon-Read clarified the selection process
In the 1st year of the year-long APUSH, teachers given spreadsheet of students (not all students from 9th grade) and asked who they would select for the AP invite-only class. This process was revisited and revised after the 1st year of implementation. Now the selection process is driven more by student interest in history + student skill
- A running theme is the lack of clarity on how you get to AP classes. This is the equity issue. Invite only classes are not in the course catalog
- On Zoom chat, some parents shared that their children were not invited to 10th APUSH even though they expressed a love for history and did well in 9th History

Currently History classes are taught in heterogeneous group; if you get B+ or above you earn honors in that class

A student asked if the move to All-HNs also means a change in curriculum or is it just a change in name?

Same question asked by a student on the Zoom chat

Does honors History 9 actually mean anything if there's nothing in that slot that's not honors?
History 9 isn't known for being a very academically rigorous class, it's just the base level. Calling it

"honors" changes nothing.

And Lily Rayman-Read responded

Lily Rayman-Read to Everyone

We have not been told our material is changing, nor being told when we could be preparing for that

We are also being told we have to add an entire civics project, so I am not sure what we are even being told we are doing except changing the name of the course.

A parent asked who wants the move to History All-HNs

The question was reiterated on the Zoom chat:

Jodi Ekelchik to Everyone

Question for clarification: was this the issue about CRLS Honors classes raised by someone/members of the CPSD School Committee pre-November 2025?

- Principal AGG said that the Dean of History is leading the charge and there are critical issues teachers who are in support.
- Lily Raymon-Read countered that there are 2 teachers who are ok with the move, but the rest of the critical issues teaching team is not. She feels it's a racist move. There are no Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports - which are needed. She stands with earned-honors model, which feels inline with Grading for Equity model used. She doesn't feel the move to All-HNs is data driven.

Emily Pollock shared a reminder that 9th US Hist has 3 teachers in class with 3 staff. She questioned what "model" being proposed for History All-HNs:

1. make classes more rigorous but would need more staff
2. renaming but not changing material taught, would be able to maintain current staffing

> Alex Bowers suggested a follow up/part 2 in next meeting

Subcommittee on Honors - Math 1/3

Recently

All non-honors math students to the honors equivalent course in the second semester (Algebra 1 SY2425 and SY2526 & Geometry SY2526) utilizing Move-up Model.

Historically

Many Students (~85%) in year-long math classes receive “Not Meeting” or “Partially Meeting” on the 10th grade MCAS Math exam,

Rationale Honors vs. Non-Honors

Course Length - Students in Non-honors classes experience 2x the math compared to their peers

- Algebra 1: Algebra 1A&B - Full Year of Math — Algebra 1 Honors - 1 Semester
- Geometry: Geometry A&B - Full Year of Math — Geometry Honors - 1 Semester
- Algebra 2: Algebra 2 - 1 Semester — Algebra 2 Honors - 1 Semester

Demographics - Significant over-representation of students of color / students with IEPs

- Algebra 1 Historic Enrollment (Full Year/Non-Honors) Example
 - Students of Color - 46.6% (compared to a school average of 26%)
 - Students with Disabilities - Historically 60-75% (compared to school average of 19%)

Enrollment - Many students select Honors level classes in 11th and 12th grade

- Non-honors classes become even more highly concentrated with students with high needs
- Looking at enrollment of our higher level math classes, the percentage of students who started in non-honors Algebra 1 course are:
 - Overall Student Body: Precalculus (<12%), AP Math course (<6%), Calculus (<3.5%)
 - Students of Color: Precalculus (<5.3%), AP Math course (<2.4%), Calculus (<1%)

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Subcommittee on Honors - Math 2/3

Student Progress

Student Achievement (MCAS - 10th grade Math)

- Students in Non-honors Algebra 1 scored Partially Meeting or Not Meeting (sub 500) expectations:
 - ~85% Historically
 - 88.5% in Class of 2027
 - 92% Students of color

Student Pathways

- Data analysis (10 year period) shows Non-honors enrollment decreases naturally over time as students select honors equivalents:
 - Algebra 1 (100 students) → Geometry (70-80 students) → Algebra 2 (50-60 students)

Student Math Identity

- Non-honors spaces prioritize building student comprehension and confidence around Mathematics
- Students did well in Non-honors class often selected “Moving-Up” into Honors classes, but higher expectations and less academic support meant that students were not truly set up for success.
 - Example: Student earns an B+ in Algebra 1AB, enrolls in Geometry Honors and earns a C-, so they transition back to Non-Honors Algebra 2

The Move-Up process has historically bridged the gap!

- Move-up students primarily start in Non-Honors classes and transition to Precalculus, AP Math, and a Calculus course at a higher rate than their peers in Non-honors Math classes:
 - Precalculus - 12% to **39%**
 - AP Math - 6% to **18%**
 - Calculus - 6% to **15%**

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Subcommittee on Honors - Math 3/3

Recent History and Current Outcomes

Fall 2024: Students in Non-honors Algebra 1AB "Moved Up" to Honors Algebra 1

- All 107 students enrolled in non-honors Algebra 1AB moved up to Honors Algebra 1
- Overall student failure rate dropped from a historic average of ~13% to ~9%
- Math department preparation included:
 - Professional Development SY24-25 (Algebra 1 (3 days), Geometry (1 day))
 - Strong educator support helping students transition
 - Listened to student voices
 - Collected data throughout the process

Fall 2025: Success on student class selection the following year

- Students who formerly enrolled in non-honors Algebra and "moved up" flipped the script:
 - 67 students selected in Honors Geometry
 - 27 students selected Non-honors Geometry A

Fall 2026: Based on these results, the Math department plans the following actions

- Move up all 27 Geometry A students into Honors Geometry Semester 2
- Move up 94 Algebra 1A students to Algebra 1 Honors
- Math department preparation includes:
 - Professional Development SY25-26 (Algebra 1 and Geometry (3 days, Algebra 2 (1 day))
 - Math teams co-observe classes (Algebra, Geometry, 8th grade math classes) to create consistency both horizontally and vertically
 - Ensure move-up students are merged into Honors classes with care
 - Additional support from guidance counselors, social workers, and school psychologist

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Math All-Honors Discussion

Dean of Math, Josh Marden, has been working on the "move-up" program, with the goal of having all students take Algebra HN and Geometry HN

- Currently, students in year-long math start in non-HNs class, e.g. 1st semester = Alg1A&B and then move to HN's class, e.g. 2nd semester = Alg1 HN (learning material and then repeating it in condensed form).
- Khan Academy showed students are able to accelerate learning once they have mastered skills that they may not have known when they entered class
- Emily P.: Seems like double the math instruction led to improved scores. Will All-HN track remove the amount of instruction?

Teachers noted data seems to suggest problems stemming from elementary and middle school

A student reiterated the possible difference in math instruction coming from the middle schools

Another teacher noted that we're looking at data overlaid with Grading for Equity

Many parents/students continue to ask why is the move to All-HNs is necessary. Are we simply renaming classes?

- A student shared that last year when they took HN's-History 9 (9th grade history) students earned honors by their distinction in the work they did.

From the Zoom Chat

- Vivian Pales: If you are looking to motivate students and create high expectations, labels aren't helpful because it's more about the student experience in the classroom than the name of the class
- Lianne Fisman: I think it is problematic to say that students who are not taking honors "don't care". I know it is largely semantics, but certain subjects are more or less challenging for individuals.
- Elizabeth Hudson: The point is mastery not labels. If we're concerned about how the labels get distributed and who is prepared to get them ... do we systemically feed that information back to the elementary and middle schools? This feels like it gets a lot simpler (offer courses at different paces and different levels and not worry about the selections being correlated with demographics) if we improve the education students are getting there such that everyone enters with a strong foundation.
- Lisa Downing: Some things are out of the control of the school but the reality is that some students capable of honors work are discouraged from taking honors. This really happens. It happened to my son and the expectations in the non honors class were really low and the students were all of color (including him). Making all classes honors won't solve the problems that expectations for some students are really low and some of those students feel like the adults in the building don't care about their success.
- Emily Pollock: I want to make sure people don't miss what Lisa just said. I have heard this same thing from so many families of color.

On the Zoom chat, Samuel asked how long move-up has existed. Teachers responded 15 years of move-up; 2 years of everyone moves up, and suggested they contact Dean Marden for additional clarification on data.

On the Zoom chat, Lily Rayman-Read raised the issue that staff were confused by the many different plans in different departments, e.g. for Critical Issues its a move to All-HNs; for Math it's a Move-Up program.

Emily Pollock then discovered that classes had already been recategorized in the course catalog for next year. All of the history courses that were "earned honors" in prior year are now marked as "honors", including critical issues.

This led to discussion on the Zoom chat about approval of programs of studies:

- Lily Rayman-Read: The program of studies must be approved by the school committee. I believe Member Hudson is on this call,
- Elizabeth Hudson: No decision was brought to the SC for approval / can confirm that much
- Lily Rayman-Read:

IGD - CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The Cambridge School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement

instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the school district.

The Superintendent will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. **The School Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach.**

The School Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

<https://policies.sparqdata.com/masc/browse/cambridgeset/cambridge/IGD>

Jodi Ekelchik reiterated Alex Bower's call for further review:

Clarifying question: given the number of clarifying questions being asked about terminology, titles, labels and rationale for types of classes (all good questions), would it make sense to send these questions back to the Committee for further review and an update for the next meeting?

Note on From Scratch Pad:

I'm interested in exploring the statement about those students in full year math classes not earning Proficient on Math MCAS. I'd wager that data already existed, as students begin taking Math MCAS as 3rd graders in heterogeneously grouped elementary classrooms. They then enter heterogeneously grouped upper school classrooms. I'd also wager that many/most of the students who didn't earn Proficient on Math MCAS as 10th graders were not earning Proficient on Math MCAS as 3rd-8th graders, either.

So I'm not sure how continuing to place these same students in heterogeneously grouped Algebra and Geometry classes will address the systemic inequities and gaps that were created well before they entered CRLS. THAT is the equity issue that the entire district needs to address.

As a Special Educator, I have spent a full calendar year of my career proctoring small group MCAS sessions in grades 6-12. I have spent literal weeks of every year sitting in rooms with students attempting to earn "Proficient" on MCAS. I've supported these same students in their general education classes across those same grade bands in every subject area.

Strong pedagogy and targeted interventions move the needle on MCAS performance. We proved this in my six years at PAUS, where we had multiple Math interventionists and spent

every single staff meeting looking at data and planning for helping students who struggle to perform better every single day—not just on MCAS. This is not what is happening in the move to all Honors math classes at CRLS.

Additionally, I do hope any data used to support this move includes data on earned grades in both the Algebra A and Geometry A spaces, and that those students' earned grades in the faster-paced Honors classes second semester are similarly tracked.

I also want to make clear that I fully believe that any student who wants to take Honors coursework should be encouraged to do so. My main frustration is the removal of choice for families and students.

Respectfully,

Megan Laskarzewski, Special Educator

Clarifying question/Honors discussion (18:43): *given the number of clarifying questions being asked about terminology, titles, labels and rationale for types of honors classes (all good questions), would it make sense to send these questions back to the sub-Committee for further review and to share an update for the next meeting? Jodi /9th grade parent*

Grading for Equity

Grading for Equity (GFE) was adopted at CRLS 2 years ago.

Staff were asked to adopt 4 pillars in classroom:

- 1) No extra credit; 2) Opportunities for retakes; 3) No participation grades; 4) Floor of 50

Grading for Equity

Pillar 1: No Extra Credit “An extra credit assignment supplants the earlier assignments that students were responsible for-the learning activities designed to teach them the content of the course-with assignments that may or may not have anything to do with course content.” Page 114	Pillar 2: Opportunities for Retakes “Students must fix their errors and give it another try until they succeed, which means we have to offer them that next try, those additional learning opportunities that come when students retake or redo an assessment” Page 165	Pillar 3: No Participation Grades “Regardless of the criteria, the category (participation) focuses more on a student’s conduct than what she has learned, and is subjective and therefore bias-infected judgment of a student’s behavior.” Page 121
Note: Prior to GFE, CRLS had no stance on Extra Credit; so it was offered per teacher’s preference.	Note: NEASC surveys students via form and in person about their abilities to revise and improve their work.	Exception: Departments may adopt a participation rubric.

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Pillar 4: Floor of 50 “Minimum grading ‘minimizes the impacts of intermittent catastrophic performance failures that certain groups of students experience, and even have tendencies to experience’ (Carifio & Carey, 2015, page 131)” Page 86	Other Impacts Penalties for late work and academic dishonesty were revised following the adoption of the GFE framework	Attendance In the SY2023-2024 implementation of GFE at CRLS the AV policy was adapted to no longer institute a 10 point penalty but rather note the excessive absences/tardies on report cards.
Note: CRLS Principal Chris Saheed implemented the floor of 50 for end of quarter grades as early as the fall of 2006	Note:	Note: The SY2025-2026 No Credit attendance policy is considered to be within the parameters of GFE

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Grade Distributions Pre/Post GFE

Standards based grading would in fact be the best implementation of the GFE framework. Teachers in the RSTA program were perhaps best prepared for the shift in grading practices because of their familiarity with grading to student competencies by standard.

GFE was not implemented with any specific grade distribution goals rather as a framework to examine and revise long standing grading practices.

One of the criticisms of GFE is that the number of F's have decreased, which is true, but they have not been eliminated by the grading practice as feared by some.

A much larger shift than F's to D's under GFE has been from A's becoming B's noticeably across departments.

ENG	2022	2023	2024	2025
As	965 53.76%	997 54.45%	978 51.39%	972 49.37%
Bs	402 22.40%	427 23.32%	456 23.96%	520 26.41%
Cs	223 12.42%	208 11.36%	265 13.93%	258 13.10%
Ds	122 6.80%	133 7.26%	136 7.15%	155 7.92%
F	83 4.62%	66 3.60%	88 3.57%	63 3.26%
Total	1795	1831	1903	1989
MAT	2022	2023	2024	2025
As	1178 48.60%	1238 49.50%	1324 48.16%	1226 44.20%
Bs	646 26.65%	667 26.67%	763 27.76%	739 26.64%
Cs	321 13.24%	337 13.47%	395 14.37%	444 16.01%
Ds	182 7.51%	162 6.48%	200 7.28%	273 9.84%
F	97 4.00%	97 3.88%	67 2.44%	92 3.32%
Total	2424	2501	2749	2774
HIS	2022	2023	2024	2025
As	1153 55.65%	1106 56.37%	1051 53.57%	1233 57.56%
Bs	473 22.83%	464 23.65%	492 25.06%	505 23.58%
Cs	240 11.58%	205 10.50%	237 12.08%	240 11.20%
Ds	103 4.97%	111 5.66%	135 6.88%	117 5.46%
F	103 4.97%	75 3.82%	47 2.40%	47 2.19%
Total	2072	1982	1982	2142
SCI	2022	2023	2024	2025
As	971 50.68%	955 51.16%	1004 50.63%	1001 47.51%
Bs	477 24.90%	495 26.58%	510 25.72%	558 26.48%
Cs	224 11.69%	222 11.90%	271 13.67%	310 14.71%
Ds	152 7.93%	115 6.16%	151 7.61%	174 8.26%
F	92 4.80%	78 4.18%	47 2.37%	64 3.04%
Total	1918	1866	1983	2107
LAN	2022	2023	2024	2025
As	816 63.80%	848 64.68%	846 61.93%	907 64.01%
Bs	231 18.06%	231 17.62%	285 20.86%	281 19.83%
Cs	111 8.68%	109 8.31%	122 8.93%	129 9.10%
Ds	65 5.08%	74 5.64%	88 5.86%	77 5.43%
F	56 4.38%	49 3.74%	33 2.42%	23 1.62%
Total	1279	1311	1368	1417

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Some clarification notes/questions from discussion:

- Participation grades are allowed but with solid, structured rubric - English and humanities teachers wanted to be able to add grades based on participation
- Lack of alignment between classes. It was noted that Science Dept: Chem, Physics & Bio classes have done good job of aligning classes
- Lily Rayman-Read noted the data compared post-pandemic (when teachers were instructed to grade more leniently) data with GFE data, which is possibly comparing already inflated grade to GFE grades. She would like to look at pre-COVID - 2017, 2018 and 2019 - data. Principal AGG will look into that.
- Lily Raymond-Read also noted that the no credit idea is a new idea which might be really effective

On the Zoom Chat:

A student asked what's the difference between a participation grade and grading something on completion? This was not answered.

Effects of GFE

A parent asked how do teachers grade on a curve with GFE?

- A student thought that Floor of 50 has made it too easy to pass. But GFE has curbed grade inflation.

A parent asked what are teachers seeing in terms of studentship?

- Lily Rayman-Read shared that teachers report GFE has been demotivating for students
- Alysa Breyer shared that she has found she needs to push/check in with students more. In her class she “grades” homework and participation; although they don’t count towards final grade it helps motivate students; final grade in her class is accumulation of what you’ve done and learned.

On the Zoom chat:

Sue Swalley asked how about problems with student attendance since the implementation of GFE

- Lily Rayman-Read that it has taught students to game the system. Knowing they automatically get the 50 (60 is passing grade), many students calculated the grade they needed to get in Q1 and Q3 and then stopped coming to class. GFE is affecting attendance negatively.

Emily Pollock shared that the retake policy has an unintended side-effect of encouraging perfectionism in high achieving students. They are allowed to retake an A to try to get an A+ (and many do).

- A student shared that retakes also incentivizes some students to not study for tests the first time they’re given, knowing there’s a retake.

Attendance/Absenteeism Statistics

Attendance Updates

- Total S1 grades issued 6797 (excludes College, Exploratory, TA)
 - Total No Credits issued 306 (55 of the 306 were course failures / 112 of the 306 were Block 1)
 - Total Students Receiving an NC 157
 - 115 students submitted 167 NC appeals (73 of which were Block 1)
 - 23 appeals were granted
- **Attendance Accuracy:** When a student is present, but their teacher is absent, and there is no substitute for the class, we may be marking more students absent than actually are because they fail to check into their Learning Community.
 - Deans of Students and LC Clerks will be asked to follow up on the phenomenon for further detail and remedy if necessary.

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Notes of clarification:

- All class failures are no credit, but not all no credits are failures (i.e. if you fail a class you do not receive credit for that class. But you can receive no credit for reasons other than a failing grade)
- 157 individual students received NC; total NCs issued is higher as some students received multiple NCs

A student asked if there was data on appeals & appeals granted?

- Reason for absence most often cited = death in the family
- Appeals granted most often if there was medical reason supported by doctor's note

A student asked for the attendance numbers/data to be rechecked

A student reiterated (from previous meetings) that we need solutions that don't punish students but instead meets them where they are. The current policy assumes the worst of students; students are not missing class for no reason, they usually have a good reason. The current policy also encourages students to come to school sick.

Zoom attendees added in the Chat:

- Sick days should count as excused absences (at least for the first few days)
- Questioned why positive COVID or flu tests aren't excused absences. Did students still require doctor's note confirming?

- Pushing students to come to school sick, puts immunocompromised population at risk

An SC member (Lianne) supported the current policy stating that there is lots of grace built into the policy (with 7 days absence). Furthermore, for state compliance we do want our attendance numbers to look strong.

For attendance, when teacher is absent and a sub-teacher is not available or comes +20 mins late, students should check in with LC. However, many do not:

- Lack of seats. If we provide more seats/ more comfortable environment, it may boost attendance
- Students report they would risk the absence if made to stay in their LC
- A teacher on the Zoom chat added that a Tier 2 intervention space could also potentially support students coming to LC for absent teacher

Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Presented by Connor Epsteinkraus, Cambridge Public Health Dept.

This national teen health survey is conducted every 2 years

Last CRLS survey was in 2024; the 2026 survey will be conducted in a month

[Link to 2024 Summary and Full Report](#)

Youth Risk Behavior Survey & Report

- [Link to 2024 Summary and Full Report](#)
- Areas of Improvement in 2024 Survey
 - General Mental Health, Self-harm, Depression, Suicide Ideation
 - Family, friend support, Teacher/school adult support, and sleep
 - Discrimination by race/ethnicity, gender/sex, sexual orientation
 - Sexual violence
 - Physical Activity
- Areas of Decline in 2024 Survey
 - Suicide attempts (up 1% from 2022)
 - Emotional Dating Violence of Control

2026 Survey will take place next month!

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What we've heard from students about YRBS:

Most students have no idea what the YRBS is. Many students do not take the survey “seriously”

Don't realize the significance of the survey and how the data is used
The questions are very personal and answering them is uncomfortable

We should do more to increase students engagement with the survey

What would make this survey feel like it actually matters?

1. A greater understanding of how the data will be used
2. More student advocates and conversations about these topics
3. More chances to see the survey results and see what the city is doing in response

Take more steps to make sure students are comfortable being honest

Do more to advertise the survey ahead of time

Morning announcement leading up to the event
Register Forum

Share the results back to students and discuss

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Proposed “Culture of Health” Event

- Have a student-led assembly in Fall ‘26
 - Make full results available
 - Share back select parts of the survey
 - Hold multiple focus group style conversations
- Continue to print select results (and student feedback) in the Register Forum over the course of the following year
- Possibility of returning to a bi-annual tradition?

A bi-annual assembly used to be held:

[CRLS Opens Conversations about Mental Health – The Register Forum](#)

A future event can be used to promote community and well-being if we also offer:

Incentives
Games
Food
Resources
etc.

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Feedback from students

- Many students were not aware of the survey or how the data is used and therefore didn’t take it seriously
- The slides outline some ways CPHD hopes to increase student awareness of survey ahead of time

Proposed “Culture of Health” Event

- Previously, results of survey and community response were shared in a school assembly.
- CPHD proposal is for a student-led assembly to present the parts of the survey data that resonates most with students
 - Students have expressed interested to have conversations about survey topics
 - Previous assemblies had a 80% attendance from student body
 - Would need commitment of venue and time from school
 - Also need to engage with students ahead of survey so they will respond to survey authentically
- Questions from Connor, CPDH:
 - What are next steps to make the assembly happen? And How can CPHD/community partners help?
 - Who were the organizers of past assembly at CRLS? Could Principal AGG find out and connect them with Connor?

Alternative Locations for Council

School Council Locations

Proposal to rotate the in-person meeting location

Why?

- Equity: In-person experience is better; Hypothesis: location drives who shows up
- Per Principal Smith: Prior traveling school council was done in Q1 and Q4 only, and did increase and diversify participation.
- Tech test at CSUS 11/18 (delayed)
- Staff Parking not available at CSUS; though we could apply to Transportation Dept for consideration
- Directly recruit 02139 & 02141 families
- Decide on CSUS pilot in March



←scratch pad. Leave any comments you have if you don't get to voice them. They will be added to the meeting notes.

If yes, communication plan:

- Advertise April 15 with every SC March meeting notice

April communications

- 3 DYK listings + Tabithalee's "Fridays" w/location and April update
- 2 weeks before: Standalone email after April 1st about meeting being at CSUS with the agenda
- Flyer for CRLS door the day of to communicate location + QR for zoom



Please take this survey to inform our discussion of School Council Locations
<https://forms.gle/oUwaEqQ545JBxoUG7>

Principal AGG suggested trying CSUS location for March meeting

- He shared that different people attended when held in different locations

The following responses and suggestions were shared:

- If meeting is not held at CRLS, will probably get fewer student participants
- Awareness (with clear agenda) drives attendance more than location
- Check tech at other locations
- In communications, check Zoom links (especially when posted via Parent Square) and in-person location

Community Topics

What questions do you have for future meetings?

- Textbook Expenditures
 - FY26: \$101,525
 - FY25: \$80,700
 - FY24: \$120,825
- In-School SAT Cost
 - FY26 (Projected Cost): \$20,000
 - FY25: \$15,000
- Clear communication to caregivers re: student volunteering times/days and club meetings
- Special Education Subcommittee Report
- Screen time/AI use
- Tier 2 supports
- HN/AP Culture @ CRLS

During the meeting:

A student asked what happens with all the discussion from the SC meeting?

Principal AGG tries to follow-up with specific questions/data; often follows up with faculty, union, other parties

Comments on textbook expenditure included:

- A question of whether we're purchasing hard copies or digital copies was raised
- For hard copies, it's sometimes cheaper to buy a whole new set of the latest edition vs. replacing a smaller amount of a back edition to match what's in the classroom.
- A student added that for reference, CRLS spends almost \$2M a year on athletics

A note from Zoom chat:

Vivian Pales to Everyone (Feb 25, 2026, 7:56 PM)

I know that CPS always are doing surveys but its important to hear student voice we need to learn so much about the Generation Z .Would be beneficial to do a student survey asking strategics and unique questions ..the lack of motivation in most of them is very worrying.We need to think out of the box and be innovative.

Comment from Scratch Pad from Jodi/9th grade parent

I have seen a number of CRLS students posting on various online forums (e.g., Nextdoor) that they would like to help neighbors with snow shoveling. The way the information is shared, this sounds like a business proposition, and they offer a decent rate. Question: Is there a way for CRLS to issue some general guidelines to students, offer a facility (e.g., a spreadsheet that lists names/contact number/Cambridge area), and share that information with the Cambridge community? As a Pilot, you could share with the City's Department of Senior services, and see if they might be interested in this as a Pilot program. This idea was inspired because I saw students willing to work for shoveling hours, and as I caught the fact that another District (Medford?) hosts a similar program but it is one where students receive Community Service Volunteer hours in exchange for shoveling snow [*Medford contact to apply: Contact Pam Kelly, Director of Elder Affairs, at pkelly@medford-ma.gov to be added to the shovel list.*].

January 21, 2026 SC Notes

In-person reps - Allan Gately Gehant, Alex Bowers, Tina Lieu, Lianne Fisman, Cullen Buie, Kitty Breen,

Other in-person attendees - Arjun Jaikumar, Isabella Ehrlich, Ellen, Azaria, Anurag, Jaspar, Sam,

Reps on Zoom: Nina Nolan, Casey Crosby, Connor Epsteinkraus, Alysa Breyer, Sunny Gupta, Lily Rayman-Read, Sara Atkim, Nicole Sapienza,

Others on Zoom: Della Puntonio, Taylor Dane, Sue Swailey, Kris Dickenson, Rich Younger, Carroll Magill, Maiko Oishi, Myrtle, Tabitha, Elizabeth Hudson, Jodi, Paul, Paul, Azaria, Erika Ramos, Jamie Lichenstein, Marci Spahiu, Melissa Maldonado, Tabithalee Howard

Note taker: Amanda Grice

Meeting info

- In-person at the Career & College Resource Center (CCRC) at CRLS (near the main entrance)
- Virtual on Zoom:
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJkKkiYS5.1>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241

- Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Follow up requested on:

- More detailed data on the line items in the school budget (SIP, General, esp. textbooks)
- More detail on how much federal funding the school relies on for program support.
- Gather data on 16-month college retention for AVID Program students and students who did not attend AVID.
- How many students lost credit for absenteeism in semester 1?

Announcements:

Celebrations and Announcements

We need your feedback!

Please take this survey to inform our discussion of School Council Locations in February. [Take the Survey >>](#)



Attendees, Please share announcements, your celebrations (personal or school related)



Regeneron Science Talent Search
Congratulations to CRLS Senior, Pax Huybers, who was named one of the 300 semi-finalists in the country! He's the 4th semi-finalist from CRLS in the last 16 years.

We are using the dyslexia-friendly Lexend font.

CRLS Family Guidebook 2026-27 is online now! Printed copies for 8th grade families will be distributed at January 28 info session.

www.crlsfamilyconnection.org



CRLS Families Social Event: February 4
6:30 - 8PM | Cambridge Main Library (not CRLS) Community Room (lower level)

Caregivers of all grades, please come meet each other and help mentor rising 9th grade families. Interpretation in:



RSVP↑

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- The guide book is available online and has been translated into 6-7 languages
- Regeneron Science Talent Finalist – 4th one in last 16 years!
- Upcoming Caregiver Gathering on February 4th from 6:30p-8p
- Unified bowling team has started
- Highschool Quiz Show Participation this Friday

- Will be fielding a team at the Harvard ethics bowl in March. Initial step for students to experience participating in an ethics bowl.
- Tomorrow the seniors can come to the main cafeteria afterschool to get help with scholarship applications.

Budget

General Fund

FY26 CRLS General Fund: \$1,193,635.00

The CRLS General Fund is also known as the “CRLS Operations Budget” and encompasses school expenses that occur on an annual and ongoing basis. Main examples of CRLS General Fund expenses include: Instructional Materials: textbooks, digital resources, PSATs, SATs, science laboratory maintenance, and the AVID Program.

- Field Trips: class-based field trips and club-based field trips
- CRLS Clubs: club advisor stipends (\$153K), expenses associated with academic such as Science Team, Speech & Debate Team, and Model United Nations (transportation to tournaments, registration fees)
- Community Partners: Bunker Hill Community College Dual Enrollment Program, Enroot, the Work Force Program, and uAspire
- Ceremonies & School Events:
 - CRLS Graduation: \$60-75K
 - Caps and gowns, diplomas, rental equipment for commencement, labor details for emergency personnel (police, fire, state police), Seals of Biliteracy
 - National Honor Society Induction Ceremony
 - CRLS Scholarship Awards Ceremony
 - CRLS Career & College Program
- Supplies: copy paper, ink, toner, pencils, etc.
- Dues & Subscriptions: College Board, NEASC, National Honor Society membership, Naviance (for post-secondary planning), and MIAA Registration

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School Improvement Plan (SIP)

FY26 CRLS SIP Budget: \$493,190.00

The CRLS School Improvement Plan or “SIP” encompasses professional development costs and school expenses that align with shorter term school and district initiatives.

Examples expenses from the CRLS School Improvement Plan:

- Staff Stipends: curriculum development, summer programming (Rise Up & Freshman Academy)
- Spring 2026 NEASC Visit
- CRLS Caregiver Academy: labor details and catering for monthly CRLS Caregiver Academy sessions, which aligns with the district's plan to focus on family engagement
- Professional Development: AP teacher training at AP Summer Institutes
- Yondr Pouches to implement the CRLS Cell Phone Policy

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Interesting Facts about the CRLS Budget

- CRLS **staff salaries** funded at district level
- **Athletics, VPA (Visual & Performing Arts), and the Office of Special Education** budgets are separate from the CRLS General Fund and SIP.
- CRLS limited to **using vendors able to accept purchase order** and payment after the goods/services delivered. Cannot use credit card or cash.
- **Digital resources** requires annual subscription payment. Unlike textbooks reusable for a few years
- CRLS contributes \$1,500 to **Junior Prom** and \$1,500 to **Senior Prom** to subsidize ticket costs

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Budget we are discussing tonight is the one we are in now, later in spring we will discuss next school year's budget.

Two kinds of budget

1. General Fund \$1.193K

2. School Improvement Plan \$493K -shorter term investment to change how things work at CRLS and if it becomes permanent should become of the General Fund

These two buckets are one that we (CRLS) controls

*These do not include staff salaries which are funded at the district level.

Spending categories:

Salaries - day to day substitutes, proctors, club advisor stipends \$296K 24.8%

Other ordinary maintenance - textbooks/digital resources, printer costs, office supplies, dual enrollment, fixing chromebooks \$283K 74.1%

Travel and training - for educators \$27K 1.1%

Mr. Gehant noted that there is ongoing review and evaluation of the budget, and to determine where and how funding should be appropriated.

Club funding has an additional source right now, from the participatory budget. That budget will be reviewed in February to assess how clubs are changing and which clubs might want to apply for the PB funding (which must be used within 3 years).

There was additional discussion and requests for more detailed data on the line items (ex. Spending on textbooks) for each budget category; in addition to a request for more detail on how much federal funding the school relies on for program support.

It was noted that having caregiver and student input on program evaluation is important before program cuts are made. For example the Youth Guidance BAM (becoming a man) for boys of color was a very important safe and welcoming space that was cut due to pandemic era ESSER funds ending. It cost about \$270K and the school hopes to have some kind of replacement at a more affordable price soon.

Avid (Advancement via individual determination) Program discontinuation/new format

AVID: Advancement Via Individual Determination

- Started at CRLS in 2007-2008 school year
- CRLS is one of five districts in Massachusetts with this program that is represented across the country (Taunton, Andover, Worcester, Chelsea)
- Despite the program's many strengths and proud alumni network, enrollment has steadily decreased over the past 19 years from a peak in the initial year of 125 students to the present day 46 students
- AP Course recruitment and Early College have been strong pulls for students, who might otherwise join or stay with AVID.
- Attrition is especially significant between AVID-9 and AVID-10 with an average of 50% of students leaving the program.

Agenda, Notes,
Slides link



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Future of AVID

- Students currently enrolled in the program will continue through graduation.
- Beginning in Fall 2026, the AVID team hopes to offer an elective course that focuses on main instructional areas (organization, note taking, time management), and a separate elective class to support students with the college application process.

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One of 5 districts in MA that had a program. Despite the many strengths, enrollment significantly decreased especially from 9th to 10th grade (perhaps due to ease of scheduling alternating half-year class with 9th grade required Health and PE classes). Theories suggest more students are taking AP college recruitment and early college courses. Will start to phase out traditional AVID program.

There was a special thanks to Ms. Davis and reflection on how impactful her work has been with students and caregivers. Many were sad to hear that the program is changing, but understand the challenges of low enrollment.

Per request, Mr. Gehant will work with Ms. Davis to gather data on 16-month college retention for AVID Program students and students who did not attend AVID.

Attendance/Absenteeism Statistics

Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism Statistics

	SY2024-2025 (By Day 82)	SY2025-2026 (By Day 82)	Improvement
Multi-Race, Not Hispanic	31%	19%	12%
Low Income	37%	29%	8%
High Needs	34%	27%	7%
White	24%	17%	7%
Students with Disabilities	36%	30%	6%
Black or African American	31%	25%	6%
Hispanic or Latino	33%	29%	4%
English Learners	24%	23%	1%
Asian	17%	17%	None

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In follow-up to prior conversations, data was presented that compares similar data from the first 82 days of the 24-25 school year to the first 82 days of this school year. Areas for further discussion/exploration include better communication for families who speak a language other than English, exploring data on the number of absences per student in each demographic, and the data on how many students lost credit for absenteeism.

Vaping

Vaping

Agenda, Notes,
Slides link



1 Vape Detectors installed

2 iDecide facilitators trained and sessions up and running

3 Minimizing suspensions for vaping where possible. (Still happens for repeat offenders)

4 Considering adding a pilot of staff bathroom monitors during period 3

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To combat the problem of vaping at school, vape detectors have been installed, iDecide facilitators have been trained, and suspensions are being minimized where possible. iCare suggested as a program for interested caregivers that is analogous to iDecide.

There was discussion about the possible option of piloting bathroom monitors (outside multi-stall bathrooms only during block 3) and the pro's and con's of that option. Some expressed discomfort at the idea of having monitors and suggested having monitors at only some bathrooms so that students could choose which bathroom (monitored or unmonitored) they felt more comfortable with .

Some were hopeful that the monitors would help curb vape use, others did not think the impact would be significant. There was a suggestion that it might be helpful to look at what other schools are doing and have done that has been successful.

WIN Block Subcommittee

WIN Block Subcommittee

Agenda, Notes,
Slides link



Goal: Examine how out of school time (OST) providers might be able to provide programming for this block (Fridays: 9:50-10:25AM)	Initial thoughts: 5-6 partners come in on three Fridays (tentatively Jan 30, Feb 6, and Feb 13) with activities to help students explore something new.
Findings: Yes! OST providers are interested in a mini-pilot program.	Proposed focus: Career awareness, job readiness skills, environmental science, wellness/physical fitness, and/or mental health.

Subcommittee members: Nina Nolan, Connor Epsteinkraus, Sean Mullan, Ellen Tomioka

Students who do not have dedicated activities during WIN could use productive options, perhaps students who don't choose a WIN option can be assigned to a block spent helping them find options. Issue is teachers who are teaching a WIN block unable to give attention to students in their Falcon Block whose default assignment to that classroom.

The WIN block subcommittee is ready to move forward with piloting out of school time (OST) provider options but needed guidance on next steps. Mr. Gately Gehant advised the subcommittee to partner with teachers as a next step to move forward with adding WIN options to MyFlex. Also, use STARS class and student government to publicize the WIN block offerings from OST providers.

AP Testing Communications

AP Testing Updates

Agenda, Notes,
Slides link



- **Total Registration**
 - Still working with Central Office and City Hall to adopt this better Point of Sale system to replace My School Bucks: Target Fall 2026
 - This school year remains with My School Bucks
- **Joining AP Classroom**
 - 100% of Fall Semester AP Students joined the AP Classroom online in College Board
 - AP Teachers will push for the same goal in second semester AP classes
- **NEW! **AP Testing Location****
 - **Longfellow Building (359 Broadway)** is the May 2026 AP Testing site
 - **Test-takers should arrive 30 minutes before test begins.**
 - First time off-campus since Cambridge College testing days (pre-COVID)
 - Less confusion for test takers and CRLS students/staff not involved with AP testing

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Hoping that Total Registration(used by all other large high schools) will be in place for next fall. For this year the school will stay with MySchoolBucks (need to wait for the City of Cambridge to approve money collection via TotalRegistration).

There will be a robust communication plan to advertise the new AP testing location at the Longfellow Building, 339 Broadway, for the May 2026 test. In addition to the new location, there will also be communication to remind students to get to the test location 30 minutes before the test starts and to plan extra commute time as needed from CRLS.

Questions?

Community Questions



scratch
pad

Agenda
+ Notes



What questions do you have for future meetings?

- Movement to Honor subcommittee formation?
- Grading for Equity Framework and Results
- Consistent exams, grading rubric and its application
- Standard welcome email from teachers to parents at semester start
- Need a class/ bridge between substantially separate and one semester honors math classes
- Clear communication to caregivers re: student volunteering times/days and club meetings

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Movement to honor subcommittee formation?

Grading for equity – is it fulfilling the goals?

Consistent exams, grading rubric and its application

Standard welcome email from teachers to parents at semester start

Clear communication to caregivers re: student volunteering times/club meetings (will add club attendance, creation/sunset, etc to the agenda for an upcoming meeting).

Need a class/bridge between substantially separate and one semester honors math classes

Robust attempt to gather student input on honors for all

What is the new civics math requirement rolling out for high school? The History department is rolling it into the 10th grade curriculum

Concern about the messaging around the transition from 8th grade to 9th grade math that were sent in Parent Square; that they were unclear and conflicting.

Request made to discuss 10th grade math MCAS at a future meeting.

Discussion of the Health 2 requirements; note was made of an early morning class option (7am 5 days a week).

Next Meeting

- Wednesday, February 25
6 - 8PM
CRLS Career & College
Resource Center (CCRC)
and via Zoom (same link)



Agenda + Notes contain the Zoom link and presentation link

 **Bookmark it**

Help improve our meetings, fill out this exit ticket before you go:





December 17, 2025

Attending representatives: Allan Gately-Gahant, Tina Lieu, Kitty Breen, Alex Bowers, Lianne Fisman, Alex Micolini,

(on Zoom): Sarah Atikem, Alysa Breyer, Connor Epsteinkraus, Sunny Gupta, Megan Laskarzewski, Sarah Fekadu, Nina Nolan, Lily Rayman-Read, Marcella Millan, Nicole Sapienza

Other attendees:, Anurag, Azaria, Maria Collins, AliceBeth Fitzpatrick, Jamie Lichenstein, Jasper

(on Zoom): Anania, Elizabeth Hudson, Rachelle Hubert, Angma Jhala, Caroll Magill, Maiko, Samuel Mayle, Oishi, Emily Pollock

Note taker: Nina Farouk

Meeting info

- In-person at the principal's conference room at CRLS (near the main entrance)
- Virtual on Zoom:
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJkKklYS5.1>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Agenda

- 6:05pm Feedback from Level Up Teachers (Movement to Honors-only courses)
- 6:30pm Competency Determination (graduation requirements for class of 2026 onward)
- 6:50pm Attendance Data Tracking
- 7:05pm Tardies related to MBTA
- 7:15pm Course exam weights

- 7:30pm 21st Century Skills in Falcon Block (Career Connected Learning in alignment with DESE's My Career and Academic Plan)

Notes

Announcements & Celebrations

1. School Council location survey

Please take this survey to inform our discussion of School Council Locations in February. [Take the Survey >>](#)

2. Broadway Redesign Meeting

Please save the date: Tuesday, January 7 | 6-8PM. [Learn more >>](#)

3. Link Up Lab

10:30- 1:30 January 5 at Russell Community Center & Moses* Community Center

Caregivers & student learn about college readiness, mastering the scholarship process, digital safety, and strong academic writing.

Feedback from Level Up Teachers (Movement to Honors-only courses)

Feedback from Level Up* Teachers

Agenda +
Notes



Current Teachers (19/34) in Level Up Classes Asked the Following:

Have you taught
in both tracked
and unleveled
schools?

- 17-Yes
- 2-No

Which system do
you prefer?

- 17-All
Honors
- 2-Tracked

*Level Up refers to classes in the core academic areas that have only honors designation: ELA9, ELA10, ELA11, Physics, and World History

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Feedback from Level Up Teachers

Agenda +
Notes



Current Teachers (19/34) in Level Up Classes Asked the Following:

Why do you prefer the system that you do?

- (Y) More reflective of the real world experience outside of CRLS
- (Y) Tracking historically locks students at the same level for their entire high school career
- (Y) Removes stigma associated with lower level classes
- (Y) Builds a stronger community in which students support one another and multiple intelligences are represented.
- (N/Y) Easier to teach a narrower spectrum of needs/abilities
- (N) Some students get bored

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What is the goal of the “all honors” (all-HN) ?

- 2 months ago the feedback from teachers (at School Council) was that they didn't want to go to all-honors (all-HN)

- Haven't heard teachers or parents tell us that they want "all honors"

Teachers voiced their frustration with equating Level Up with all-HN system as they felt they're not comparable

- Level Up has more support in classroom (2 teachers + 1 Special educator)
 - positives include timely/responsive feedback and ability to be more reflective
- Very different from earned HN's classroom (more challenging),
 - earned HN require B+ or higher on midterm and final exams; motivational for student to push themselves to

Teachers questioned the feedback from the survey:

- Teachers not teaching HNs not interviewed;
- Teachers asked if math or history teachers were interviewed.
- Reiteration that hearing from so many families that their students are struggling in HN classes.

Conversation from 2-months ago centered around HN Algebra -

Teachers shared:

- They are seeing students who are not going to pass Algebra 1A and now have nowhere to go but an HN Algebra I class (instead of Algebra 1B in the past, which was the 2nd semester of full year Algebra 1)
- Teachers hearing a lot about heterogeneous grouping - in middle school heterogeneous classrooms are better supported but it does mean some kids are coming into CRLS with skill deficits which all-HN classes may not be able to support
- Forcing students to take HN class v. different than providing them HN option

Student asked why are some kids getting bored in all-HN?

- There's quite a gap between who knows what and who is learning what. By the end of the semester, teacher is spending time getting kids up to speed, so the kids who already know that stuff are bored.

Parents shared:

- One child failed Alg 1 and retook next semester; passed with tutoring support > get more support/tutoring for students who need it.
- Mr. Marden (head of math) reached out to many incoming families to figure out which math class they needed to be placed into - but this is not sustainable. How do families learn where their student is struggling before it gets too late?

Tutoring program is overwhelmed - especially for Alg and Geo; program director believes this is related to push to all-HN math; CRLS does not have the resources to support all students right now

One parent suggested that from the discussion, it seems like we need to go back to the drawing board: community asking why are we pushing if this is not necessary. Feel like there was not same consideration in the move to honors as for the schedule audit.

There was a discussion about curriculum:

- Non-HNs class needs to cover the same material as HN class (e.g. Alg 1)
 - Teachers confirmed that Alg A/B covered the exact same material as HN-Alg 1
- HN class covers the same material but doing more in-depth work (in social studies/ELA)

Parent wondering if in all-HNs system, students getting watered-down HN curriculum. Needs to be some significant teacher training + special educator supporting classrooms with kids on IEPs.

Competency Determination - Graduation Requirements for Class of 2026 onwards

Please see [slides 10-19](#) for timeline, considerations for students with disabilities, ELL & late-enrolling students, and additional information

Overview

- MCAS isn't a graduation requirement anymore, so Massachusetts is asking school districts what is the replacement?
- CRLS is recommending: passing a **final assessment** or **capstone project/portfolio** in:
 - 2 English Language Arts classes
 - 2 Math (Algebra 1 and Geometry)
 - 1 Science (Physics, Chemistry, or Biology)
 - 1 U.S. History: create a **civic-engagement project**
- Recommendation must be approved by the Cambridge School Committee by the end of 2025

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Definitions

What is a final assessment?

An exam at the end of a class that covers the contents of the whole class.

What is a capstone project?

- Independent research project on a student-chosen topic
- Demonstrates critical thinking, research skills
- Usually presented to a panel of teachers, caregivers and community members.

What is a portfolio?

A collection of a student's best work in a class that shows what they've learned.

What is a student-led civic engagement project?

Students take a real-world problem in their school or community, research its root causes, and develop an action plan to address it.



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Our Proposed Approach: Coursework & Mastery

10 credits = 1 semester-long class

	Coursework	Mastery
ELA	Students must earn 20 credits in high school English Language Arts courses as identified on this list of CPS HS Courses	Students will demonstrate proficiency by passing a final assessment or capstone project/writing portfolio that has been identified by the department as assessing priority ELA/Literacy standards at or above the grade 10 level.
Math	Students must earn 20 credits in high school mathematics courses, 10 of which have to be at least in Geometry or a higher math course and included on this list of CPS HS Courses .	Students will demonstrate proficiency by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by the department as assessing the priority standards at or above Algebra 1 & Geometry.
Science	Students must earn a minimum of 10 credits in either Physics, Chemistry, or Biology. Courses in each of these science disciplines are identified on this list of CPS HS Courses .	Students will demonstrate proficiency by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by the department as assessing the priority standards in Biology, Chemistry, or Physics.
History	Students must earn 10 credits in United States History by taking a course on this list of CPS HS Courses .	Students will complete a student-led civic engagement project that meets criteria established by the state.

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Key Dates:

- **July 2025:** DESE instructed districts to develop a CD policy that details how students, *starting with the Class of 2026*, will meet the new requirements.
- **Fall 2025:** A working group of Deans of Curriculum, Curriculum Directors, Guidance, Office of Special Education and Multilingual Department convened to develop policy, and shared draft with Faculty Advisory Council and School Site Council.
- **On or before Dec 31, 2025:** The policy must be approved by School Committee and posted publicly in translated form.

Cambridge School Committee voted and passed CD policy.

CRLS is recommending passing a final assessment or a capstone project/presentation/portfolio of work

DESE requires the new CD policy must address considerations for (see slides):

- Students with disabilities
- English learners
 - Able to take Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) version of class, e.g. math, physics, etc.
- Late-enrolling students
 - CRLS will do transcript reviews

For out-of-district students - CRLS maps their classes to the requirements of CRLS

Other Q&As that came up in discussion:

- Need to also retroactively give diplomas to kids who left and only needed MCAS for diploma
- Common classes should have the same/common exam, regardless of teacher
 - For clarification, different class names (even in same subject area) would get different exam, e.g. Honors Alg 1 vs regular Alg 1 might have different exams; SEI Physics would take a different exam from Honors Physics.
- Under the MCAS system, students could get a “local” diploma” if they met all graduation requirements but failed MCAS. In new CD system, can students get a “local diploma” if they pass the class but not the final competency assessment? In these cases they would appeal with the principal.
- Will the CD requirements lead to more standardization in classes? Students are already having different experiences depending on who the teacher is.

Absenteeism/Attendance Statistics

	SY2024-2025	SY2025-2026
Students with Disabilities	45%	29%
Low Income	42%	29%
High Needs	41%	27%
Hispanic or Latino	39%	25%
Multi-Race, Not Hispanic	36%	19%
Black or African American	36%	25%
English Learners	30%	23%
White	26%	17%
Asian	21%	17%

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DESE chronic absenteeism is pulled from our daily data

Questions about the data

- This year the data no longer includes tardies but last year tardies were included (when there was a formula for x number of tardies were considered equivalent to an absence).
- Clarification that the data is saying **45% of students with disabilities were chronically absent last year** i.e. If there are 100 kids with disabilities, 45 of them chronically absent
- Data should pull from comparable time periods.
 - Student questioned: this year's data measures only 70 days; last year's data is the aggregate of the whole year. For better comparison - do we look at the first 70 days of both years.
 - Senior attendance drops in Q4 and could have skewed last year's data.
 - Pulling comparable time periods may also explain some absences. E.g Last day in December is usually a ½ day and has v. high absenteeism - community day vs. academic day and people leave early for vacation.

- A parent asked how many kids exactly are chronic absent? About 400. From SY2025-2026 data this translates to missing more than 7 days in the 70 days of school we've had so far.

Responses to the data and further disaggregation

- Parent reiterated many international students leave early/ return late for family reasons. They asked if this data could be further teased out. Also to see when absences are - e.g. all at beginning of term (family trip) or sporadic throughout.
- Another parent asked if there is something that CRLS can do institutionally to better support students with disabilities to curb absenteeism. How to deep dive into why these students are absent?
 - Principal GG may ask LCs to try survey these students and put their reasons into buckets to better understand
- A teacher helped define "high needs students" = students with disability, low income, English language learners - may be counted twice in this data set. May need to look at intersectionality to better disaggregate.

Questions about attendance marking process

- Tardies are marked as absent when students miss more than half the class. Teachers asked to take attendance at beginning of class and end of class.
- Absences are marked per class. Daily absences are taken from Period 2. But if you are in school for P1, leave for a doc appt in P2, and return for P3 and P4 > should correct to present (not absent).

Student representatives highlighted that the discussion pointed out how confusing attendance policy continues to be. Request that it be posted somewhere for reference.

Bus Sub Committee

Issue: Students not able to get to school on time due to buses being late, not showing up, not stopping, or not running frequently enough.

Research: We want to look into which routes have the most problems and quantify how big the problem is.

Collecting data for 2 weeks > will then take data to MBTA to ask for changes

Committee has designed a poll to send to students and families after Winter break.

- Identify problem bus routes **and trains** and reasons why late, e.g. buses not stopping, buses not arriving. Red line is an option on survey poll.

Principal GG will send out family poll.

Collect data in digital format but may also need analog version at door for better student participation.

Course Exam Weight

From our student gov:

1. Common courses should have the common weight for midterms and finals, i.e. not dependent on different teachers
2. Past conversations to increase exam weight from 9th to 12th grade
 - Students are concerned that the weight of tests/exams on your grade make it hard for students to do well if they are bad test takers; e.g. can't bring grade up through homework; if you get a bad grade on the test retake then your grade goes down further

How is CRLS supporting students, e.g. improving test taking so they can do well in classes?

- Cambridge Volunteers does partner with Harvard - but very reliant on college students and their semester schedule
- Parent suggested peer-to-peer teaching - would benefit weaker students as research shows students increase their learning through teaching peers
- Teen health subcommittee recommended creating "buddy groups" of 3-4 students who could study together and support each other academically
- Teachers offer office hours (required by contract to have at least an hour a week). Teachers shared that it's often more powerful getting help from teachers vs. a tutor.

A student asked if there was a way to have teacher lower weight of exams.

Another student asked if there should be standardization between common classes with weight of all graded elements of class, e.g. exam, papers, quizzes, etc. and not just exams

There was some discussion around grading for equity and teaching practices:

- Are students getting different grades from diff teachers of common class.
 - Principal AGG, through checking grade books, doesn't believe this is happening.
- Students are asked to make revisions, which leads to better understanding/mastery of the material
- Teachers recognize that students may show mastery of material in e.g. Quiz 8, after failing to do so in previous quizzes - teachers should apply measurement of mastery in all assessments
- Grading for equity removed extra credit option; added grading for participation - revisit some portions?
- A teacher saw removing extra credit leading to teachers reassessing their teaching practices. They believed conversations should be around preparing students better + addition of problem solving skills (not supporting them through extra credit.)
- Teachers shared that they saw greater weight in exams in higher grades as being closer to college systems. Another teacher added that in college, professors will weigh things according to their philosophy of teaching, and so do many high school educators.

Falcon Block

There is considerable information about Falcon Block on [Slides 26-37](#).

Intentional curriculum during Thursday Falcon Pathways Block (20mins)

Providing Career Connected Learning - skills include

- Collaborative problem solving
- Creative thinking
- Adaptability
- Personal development and social emotional learning
- Employability skills

Falcon Block started in 2022-23 with monthly themed lessons

2023-24 continued developing the curriculum adding financial literacy, career awareness and SEL

2024-25 Grade level sequencing + Wayfinder curriculum for SEL for 9th & 10th

2025-26 Launch Career Connected Learning + Wayfinder curriculum now from 6th - 12th

What does Career Connected Learning look like?

Goal to prepare students for their future careers

Using DESE MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan)

Help kids develop sense of belonging and self; identify future goals, discover personal interests and skills; develop communication + critical thinking skills

These are also happening in classrooms; Falcon Block to help solidify

Tools using to inform and build curriculum:

- Wayfinder 6 core skills
- US Dept Ed Employability Skills Framework - how do they align with MyCAP
- CPS mission

This year, program is focused on how to create flow of curriculum - what elements/themes to teach in each grade level, how to scaffold.

- Last year collected data from teachers; this year collecting data from students (hearing from freshmen)
- The 9th grade cohort is group that's driving the system for future
- This year, not all Falcon Block classroom are teaching 100% these or may be teaching a different way - as Falcon Block teachers are seeing what class needs at time

Discussion Q&A

- Parent reporting senior student found FB a waste of time and folks no longer go.

Program manager shared that curriculum will not really impact 12th grade

- Parent asked if there's lessons that's working well?

Program manager gave e.g. of communication exercise - "pictionary" type game, kids drew beach from peer description

- Parent asked if program is coordinating with guidance counselors? Can they refer back to something learned in FB? That is the hope. CRLS will continue to use Naviance as guidance counseling/class planning tool
- Program coordinates with Youth Employment Center about employability.
- For non-college bound kids, how is Falcon Block supporting those students?
 - SEL and career exploration piece
 - Post-grad opportunity lesson (12th grade curriculum moving to 11th) - created by CRLS math teachers

Other Announcements

CRLS will receive \$50K from Cambridge Participatory Budgeting for each of the next three years for club funding

Where can families find info on clubs?

<https://secure1.cpsd.us/activities/highschool.php?studentID=>

MyFlex interface is not user-friendly. It is not easy to find WIN block choices outside of ones that a student knows exists.

November 19, 2025

Attending representatives: (in-person) Cullen Buie, Casey Crosby, Marcela Millan, Lianne Fisman, Alex Bowers, Tina Lieu, Allan Gately Gehant, (virtual) Lily Read, Dr. Alysa Breyer, Dr. Sunny Gupta, Megan Laskarzewski, Nicole Sapienza, Connor Epsteinkraus, Tabithalee Howard, Sara Atikem, Sarah F

Other attendees: (in person) Isabella Ehrlich, Jamie Lichenstein, Azaria, Sam Mayle, Jaspar, Anurag, Rich, Jamie Lichenstein (virtual) Nina Farouk, Amanda Grice, Ariel Gibson, Tara E, Sue Swalley, Dr. Susie Espinosa, Lisa Waters, Ellen T, J Mullan, Maria Collins, Carroll Magill,

Jessie Young, Roy Doucette, Lisa Downing, Ariel Gibson, Debi Milligan, Melissa Maldinado, Roy Doucette

Note taker: Amanda Grice

Meeting info

- In-person at the principal's conference room at CRLS (near the main entrance)
- Virtual on Zoom:
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJKKkIYS5.1#success>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form](#) fill out to volunteer for a subcommittee and helping us improve

Agenda (times are approximate)

- 6:00PM Announcements & Celebrations
- 6:05PM School Council Location Discussion
- 6:20PM Schedule Audit (reasons for, block schedule pros and cons)
- 6:30PM Communications Subcommittee report & recommendations
- 6:45PM Broadway Crossing Update (safety issue)
- 7:00PM Attendance (update on impacts, better communication to students & families)
- 7:20PM YONDR pack Update
- 7:35 PM SIP Progress (checking in on where we are)

- 7:45PM Community Topics (time for people to recommend future topics)
- 7:55PM Closing

Celebrations and Announcements



We need your feedback!

Please take this survey to inform our discussion of School Council Locations
<https://forms.gle/oUwaEqQ545JBxoUG7>



Falcon's Market & Grocery Gift Card Drive

We have a generous community!

\$16,000+ raised for the Falcon's Market (CRLS Food Pantry)

\$850 in grocery gift cards received

MA Music Educators Assoc. Senior District Festival

From 1050+ students who auditioned, congratulations to our 5 CRLS students who were accepted into this year's MA Music Educators Assoc. Senior District Festival.

Corrado Botto - Tenor Saxophone, **Rafi Crane** - Trombone, **Noah Eastley** - Clarinet, **Aden Hwang** - Oboe, **Eleanor Younger** - French Horn

Attendees, Please speak up with announcements, your celebrations (personal or school related)

Announcements & Celebrations

There was an overwhelming response to the request for donations for the food pantry. The goal of being able to provide \$50 per family in gift cards/donations was met. The plan is to keep this as an annual tradition going forward. Thank you to all involved in the effort!

Five CRLS students were accepted into MA Music Educators Association Senior District Festival.

School Council Locations

Proposal to rotate the in-person meeting location

Why?

- Equity: In-person experience is better; Hypothesis: location drives who shows up
- Per Principal Smith: Prior traveling school council was done in Q1 and Q4 only, and did increase and diversify participation.
- Tech test at CSUS 11/18 (delayed)
- Staff Parking not available at CSUS; though we could apply to Transportation Dept for consideration
- Directly recruit 02139 & 02141 families
- Decide on CSUS pilot in March



←scratch pad. Leave any comments you have if you don't get to voice them. They will be added to the meeting notes.

If yes, communication plan:

- Advertise April 15 with every SC March meeting notice

April communications

- 3 DYK listings + Tabithalee's "Fridays" w/location and April update
- 2 weeks before: Standalone email after April 1st about meeting being at CSUS with the agenda
- Flyer for CRLS door the day of to communicate location + QR for zoom



Please take this survey to inform our discussion of School Council Locations

<https://forms.gle/oUwaEqQ545JBxoUG7>

School Council Location Discussion

Continuing to explore ideas for moving the council meeting to allow increased access for families who live in other communities, particularly those in the 02139 and 02141 locations. We can get parking considerations via the city for an event permit. Will vote in February about moving SC meeting in April so there is lead time to plan if the decision is to move forward.

Students noted that there might be travel challenges for some, but leaning into the hybrid option would be helpful and that having an alternative location might be helpful in increasing participation.

In the past, Principal Smith only moved the SC meeting in Q1 and Q4 to avoid weather (snow) issues.

Schedule Audit (reasons for, block schedule pros and cons)

Questions for Schedule Audit

Evaluate current 4 classes per semester (8/year) vs. other options

Agenda +
Notes



Maximizing Access to Career/Tech Program:

- Is the current schedule prohibiting greater access to RSTA programming?
- If yes, are there more ideal schedules or adaptations to the RSTA program to grow enrollment

Internships/Early College Access:

- Is the current schedule prohibiting greater access to external internship and early college or dual enrollment opportunities?
- If yes, are there more ideal schedules or to grow enrollment in internships and early college.

Special Education & Multilingual Learners:

- Is the current schedule prohibiting vulnerable populations from accessing the full range of course offerings?
- If yes, are there more ideal schedules to increase access?

Heard at SC last year: "No special education supports available for semester-long AP classes because of lack of enrollment."

"What depth of learning is possible in 1 semester?"

"Students with after school obligations may shy away from AP classes due to homework load, which would be less if yearlong."

Concerns of Block Schedule

- **Impact on depth of learning:** Semester-long AP classes (e.g., AP Stats...) have to rush to get all the content covered, especially in 2nd semester, since exam is in early May
- **Gaps between sequential classes:** Students may go an entire calendar year without taking their next Math or World Language course (ie. HN Geo ending Jan 2025; HN Alg II beginning Jan 2026)

- **Relationship building:** Challenging to build relationships between students & teachers in one semester
- **Challenging to "go deep" into curriculum** when it is stuffed into one semester. Spreading content over one year allows more time to truly wrestle with material covered.

Original Reasons for Block Schedule

- **Take more classes each year** (=more electives, 8 not 7 classes a year)
 - Can double up in sequential subjects like math and science
- **More individualized attention per students**
 - Fewer classes and students for educators each semester means teachers get to know their students better
 - Teachers have more usable instructional time
- **More time for students to think and engage in active learning with longer class**

- **Less fragmentation, less hectic** than 7 shorter classes, and **fewer discipline problems**
- **Easier for absent students to make-up work** for 4 classes (instead of 7)
- **Making up a failed class:** Student can repeat the class the next semester

The schedule audit was named as part of the school improvement plan this year. Given that the 4x4 block was put in place 20 years ago it seems to be an appropriate time to pause and review the block schedule. Ideally the review will happen with a consultant to review data and to help define the questions that need to be answered; like is the current schedule maximizing the opportunity, is there a better schedule that maximizes early college entry, and multilingual learners. Other questions to be explored are is the semester too tight and putting too much pressure on learners/educators. There are, at times, gaps between sequential classes. The audit should also help to explore the reasons that the block schedule was changed: the block schedule provides 8 classes not 7, provides the double up in sequential classes like math and science, more individual attention, fewer classes and students and provides teachers more useable instruction time and students fewer transition times during the day.

In re: the audit, feedback was provided that there are several important factors to consider including ensuring the voice of the students (students on IEP's also) and educators are included in the audit. There is currently no set timeline for this audit.

Reasons to hire consultants: leverage their expertise at having seen 100s or 1000s of schedules. We want to start them asap. We can't change the schedule anyways unless the teacher contract changes, so this isn't a fast thing, but would need to know well in advance if we want to change.

Lianne (rep) volunteered to look at the literature on block vs not block scheduling on outcomes.

Other feedback

Feedback pro-block schedule

- Cannot do AP practice tests in shorter class periods
- Harvard classes, early college classes and internships benefit from the block schedule
- Ability to “double up” in languages, math, sciences
- Lab, art and RSTA classes benefit from longer blocks
 - VPA teacher: needs longer block to make progress as it takes 20 min for set up and cleanup and 20 min doing the work. Moving from 7 to 4 classes impacted quality of work possible
- Students on IEPs, with executive function deficits benefit from only having to juggle four classes at a time.
- Four blocks is easier for arts for repair/recovery of materials, supplies, equipment

Feedback against block schedule

- Large gap between sequential courses in math, science
- Full year is easier to build a relationship btw teacher/student
- There were double blocks in the past (to address need for longer period for some classes)

Communications Subcommittee report & recommendations

School Communications Subcommittee Findings

- Student access to opportunities is reduced as caregivers struggle to find information due to poor messaging and website practices
 - Messaging may not explain significance, context, timeline (e.g., PSAT)
 - DYK incomplete (e.g., 11/13 Caregiver Academy not listed in 11/12 DYK)
 - No central location (e.g., webpage) to access information
 - Meeting information (e.g., agenda, video, presentations) difficult to find
- Departments not coordinating messaging
 - Messages crossed
 - Notifications not sent in time (e.g., college and career night)
 - Notification not sent to some LCs (e.g., attendance policy examples)
- Messaging may lack author (e.g., name, title) and contact info
- Messages sent via ASPEN lack translation feature of ParentSquare (Does PS lack Aspen functionality?)

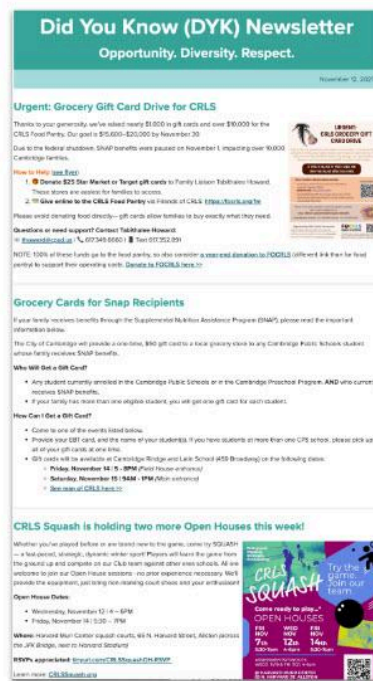
*Subcommittee members:
Alex Bowers,
Jennifer Betancourt,
and Tina Lieu*

School Communications Subcommittee Recommendations (1)

- Use plain English, avoid using “school speak” (ask AI to help you)
- Announce important events at least 2 weeks (preferable 3 weeks ahead)
 - Ex. Curriculum Night, Rising 9th grade info session, caregiver/teacher conferences
 - Aim for 3 communications including 1 standalone email
- “Market” events & explain the why
 - Clickbait-ey subject line
 - Who needs to know
 - **What is the significance/benefits of event/item** (e.g., AP deadlines, FAFSA help, etc.)?
- **Ensure all events** appear in the DYK
 - E.g., Nov 4 DYK was missing Nov 13 Caregiver Academy and Dec 2 Principal Coffee Hour
- Create webpage with links to recordings, slides, etc. from all events
- Add signature line to all email (sender and title) and contact for questions
- Vary meeting times/days of week and offer Zoom options, video recordings
- Schedule workshops normally held on Curriculum Night on a different day so more can attend (Now: 5PM weekday is early, simultaneous sessions, may appeal to same people)

School Communications Subcommittee Recommendations (2)

- Bring production of DYK in-house to CRLS (currently: ICTS)
 - CRLS staff know what’s going on
 - Ask someone in the know and tech savvy? A librarian?
 - **List items by date priority**; visually indicate resource info
 - Add clickable TOC at the top of the email (easy to scan)
 - Add video summary for non-native English speakers
 - Add captions to videos
- Create a Communications Best Practices checklist



The goal of the communications subcommittee is to make sure people have the right information amongst the various communications that are sent out. Students’ access to opportunities can be impacted when communications are not received as intended. The

DYK communication is not a single source of information. General feedback is that messaging is not always coordinated or consistent.

Guidance dept info is still coming thru Aspen, so people are not getting critical info for after high school life.

It's getting staff adjusted to using Parent Square instead of Aspen. Jan. 8 Lily Rivera (CPSD communications) will offer parents info about ParentSquare. The translation in PS has to be set up.

It is still an Aspen issue that both parents will not get all emails because there is a primary and secondary caregiver in the system.

ICTS is working with school administration to address many of the concerns about electronic communication, specifically within the DYK. A new format for the DYK is coming soon. Assistant Principal Milner will be reviewing the DYK content for completeness.

Broadway Morning Crossing Update

14 Crosswalks to enter CRLS Campus: 4 with electronic walk/don't walk signs, 1 blinking yellow lights with push button, 9 remaining have yellow diamond crosswalk signage without lighting.

4 Blinking yellow lights with reduced mileage posted at four corners of campus

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• October 23 Principal GG data collection @ Solomon Bldg Crossing (40 students)• October 24 Officer Harold supervised @ Felton Crossing• November 12 Principal GG data collection @ Felton Crossing (356 students) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assign the CRLS Resource Officer to assist x days a week?• Cambridge Department of Traffic and Parking committed to do a study |
|--|---|

Broadway Crossing Update (safety issue)

14 crosswalks, 4 have push button signs, 1 has a yellow blinking lights, the rest are just painted crosswalks. School administration and CPD have been out there doing safety assessments. The Traffic Department will do a study re: the crossing and then based on the study they will see if there are improvements that are needed.

A staff member was hit while crossing over the summer. No other accidents have been reported.

Caregivers volunteered to serve as crossing guards if CPD is unable to help.

A student noted that lunchtime crossing is worse than the morning because there are trucks blocking sightlines for cars and pedestrians making the crossing really difficult.

A suggestion was made to partner with Broadway Market on crossing solutions. Crossing guards are already in short supply and elementary schools get priority.

Attendance (update on impacts, better communication to students & families)

The first quarter just ended so for some students the no credit outcome became a reality. There was review and discussion about the attendance policy and the outcomes for absences. While the data indicates that chronic absenteeism is down 5.5% that is still within the margin of error. X number of tardies were counted as absences last year, but not this year so the data will reflect that change. Tardies are still important to avoid - it will be important to learn for later in life. It impacts your academics and might result in calling parents

Overall, administration has noticed a decrease in absenteeism.

Absenteeism is a complex issue and the goal of the policy is to try to help prepare students for the future while understanding that one model might not fit every situation.

Attendance Policy, Part 2

- A simpler way to understand what triggers a No Credit (NC)
- The impact of the new attendance policy in quarter 1





Caregivers: When your child is absent, ALWAYS contact

- Your learning community (LC) Clerk and Dean of Students
- The teachers whose classes will be missed

And provide the reason for absence

Why?

The absence will be noted so that your child is allowed to make up missed tests and assignments.

Request for the below slide to be shared in the DYK newsletter

Students may receive a No Credit (NC) for a course if they miss:

15 classes in a semester long course	e.g., Geometry Honors
15 classes in a year-long course that meets on alternating days	e.g., English 9
22 classes in a year-long course that meets every day	e.g., AP Calculus AB
7 classes in a semester long course that meets every other day	e.g., 9th grade PE, Academic support
7 classes in the 4th quarter - for a senior 12th graders are expected to attend class until school ends for them.	CAMBRIDGE RINDGE & LATIN SCHOOL

Students and families may appeal an NC

Absences that Do Not Count Towards AV or NC

- Observance of major religious holidays
- Legal requirement
(with documentation)
- Medical appointments
(with documentation, ex. a doctor's note)
- College visits *(limited to 3 days for grade 12, and 2 days for grade 11)*
- School-sponsored/school-approved trips or activities
- School Service-Related Absences
(i.e. guidance, counseling, testing, OSE, nurse's office)
- In School and Out of School Suspensions
- Family trip *(One 5-day trip in 4 years)*
- Bereavement

Attendance Rules

- **Attendance Violation (AV)** for 7 or more class absences in a quarter
- One quarter is ~8 weeks long



scratch pad

Basically, within a quarter (42-25 days) students can be sick 6 days without penalty. This policy correction is not the sole cure to absenteeism.

Question: Do we know who is less absent this year? (at school committee reported that 50% of absenteeism was students with an IEP)

Worry that this policy is punitive

Teachers report students are coming to class more than last year because of the policy and has dramatically improved attendance in their classes

Some students are under a lot of pressure and need time to decide that they need to skip a class

Dean: We do try to find out why a kid doesn't come to school. We want to know how the kid is feeling and why avoiding school. Not trying to take a punitive approach. There's never just one reason

Students are getting 14 days to be out

Staff get 15 days to be sick

Attendance Policy Impact

Attendance Quarter 1

2024

685 students received
1755 Attendance
Violations (AVs).
Students did not lose
credit for AVs

2025

~200 students (~10%)
received 482 AVs
39 students received 66
No Credit (NC; for an
alternating,
semester-long class)

Impact: $\frac{2}{3}$ fewer students received AVs this quarter than last year. Chronic absenteeism is down 5.5% over the same time last year.



Questions

- What is the procedure if a student is marked absent but should have been tardy?
- Should there be caregiver & student "homework" around attendance policy to ensure caregivers understand the policy?

Absences that Do Not Count Towards AV or NC

- Observance of major religious holidays
- Legal requirement
(with documentation)
- Medical appointments
(with documentation, ex. a doctor's note)
- College visits (limited to 3 days for grade 12, and 2 days for grade 11)
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scratch pad

YONDR pack Update

Yondr Pack Update

Caregivers can verify if student is phoneless.

Less phones visible in classes, halls, and cafeteria than this time last year.

Long lines for verifying Yondr Packs - being addressed by only checking every x person instead of every person. Checks are not done daily.

scratch pad

Students gave feedback that overall the phone policy and Yondr pouches are working well. There is a cultural pressure not to pull out one's phone. Educators also felt that there is much less phone use school-wide. There will be ongoing monitoring of check points to ensure the process is working as intended and to monitor pain-points.

Other feedback

- Student brought up that during an unplanned emergency (elevator fire), it was hard to get out the exit because some kids were trying to unlock their phones.
- Some feel phone checks at the door make school less welcoming in the morning
- Student voiced some concern of racial profiling in the pouch checks.
- Principal reports fewer students spending a lot of time in the restroom, mostly happening in period 4

SIP Progress (checking in on where we are)



scratch pad

School Improvement Plan Progress

Family Engagement

- ☐ **Add 2 school counselors, shift to 9-12 grade guidance model**
 - ☐ Reduces caseload per counselor from 200
 - ☐ Same counselor until graduation strengthens support
 - ☐ Follows NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) recommendation
- ☐ **Continue and Expand Caregiver Workshops**
 - ☐ Help families partner with CRLS and better navigate high school with their students
 - ☐ Caregiver Academy, partnering with Cambridge Families of Color Coalition, monthly Sept - May this school year
- ☐ **Continual improvement of existing systems**
 - ☐ Communications: Principal's bulletins, CRLS website, publish CRLS half-day and holiday calendar. Reprint of CRLS Family Guidebook in partnership with CRLS Family Connection, CRLS staff review of contents
 - ☐ Calendar committee
 - ☐ Events: Curriculum Night, Conferences, Parent Coffees

Family Engagement

- Add 2 school counselors. Shuffled the caseload. Significantly lowered their caseload.
- And structured for students to have 1 counselor for 4 years
- Committed to Caregiver Academy: already done 3 this year, planned for monthly, strong collabs with staff and CFCC, will keep improving as it goes.

- Improvement of existing systems: Got out half day and holiday calendar, will reprint guidebook and send in January, review DYK, reconstituted calendar committee, send out feedback forms for events

School Improvement Plan Progress



School Climate

- ❑ **WIN (What I Need) Block**
 - ❑ Started October 17
 - ❑ Converts Balance Block Fridays and some Thursday Falcon Blocks
 - ❑ Students choose sessions via My Flex Learning
- ❑ **Schedule Audit** (20 years since switch to Block Schedule)
 - ❑ Review of current schedule and get recommendations for possible changes
 - ❑ Scheduling consultants ready will start when we finalize goals
- ❑ **i-Decide training and implementation to address vaping**
 - ❑ 40+ staff trained in August/September, and students can opt-in or be referred

School Climate

- Added WIN block that started in October - Some clubs are using it. Works with Aspen
- Schedule audit
- I-Decide: additional staff continue to be trained (40+ staff have been trained)

School Improvement Plan Progress



Math

- ❑ **Continue revision of Math Move Up Program**
 - ❑ Fall Algebra 1A >> Honors Algebra 1
 - ❑ Fall Geometry A >> Honors Geometry
- ❑ **Expanding Advanced Math Options & Clear Pathways**
 - ❑ 80+ requests for Multivariable Calculus this school year
 - ❑ Create more opportunities for college-level math (via dual enrollment or college partnerships)
 - ❑ Create more documentation about ways to engage in math at CRLS
- ❑ **Collaboration with Upper School Math Partners**
 - ❑ CRLS plan for impacts as 8th grade teaches Algebra 1 starting in 2026-27 school year

Math

- Continue revision of Math Move Up Program
- Expanding Advanced Math Options (create more options for college-level like possible partnership with UMASS Boston as a dual-enrollment partnership similar to Bunker Hill It could significantly expand to math, history, sci and world lang (not just ela), 80+ requests for multivariable calc
- Maine central community college is sponsoring our business classes to get college credit
- Collaboration with Upper School Math Partners for 8th grade which is hybrid-ish for Algebra 1 this year and teaching full Algebra 1 next year.

To the question of if we are accelerating kids too fast, Dean Marden is talking to those kids's parents who would be affected to make sure that is not happening

A caregiver noted that it would be really helpful to understand for 8th graders who do not have a clear pathway to know how the math pathway works.

School Improvement Plan Progress


scratch pad

Literacy

- ❑ **Level Up Expansion to Multilingual Learners**
 - ❑ Level Up English 9 and World History adds (English as a second language) ESL learners into main curriculum with ESL instructor
- ❑ **AP Seminar Exploration**
 - ❑ Choose what real-world or academic topics to investigate, find and use evidence from experts, present the case from your view with writing and multimedia presentations
 - ❑ 10th grade English team explores adding AP Seminar for 10th graders in SY2026-27 (school year 2026-27)
- ❑ **Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) College Writing Expansion**
 - ❑ Enable doubling of enrollment this school year
 - ❑ Explore BHCC becoming an “Early College” program so it can further expand SY2026-27

Literacy

- Level-Up English 9 Expansion
- AP Seminar Exploration
- Bunker Hill College Writing Class – if this has been taken, not allowed to take the AP writing class. Students can sign up independently to self-study. But self-study might not give you the same access to the materials/content.

School Improvement Plan Progress


scratch pad

Post Secondary Pathways

- ❑ **Internships**
 - ❑ Expand opportunities and improve communication
- ❑ **Expand Early College & Dual Enrollment**
 - ❑ New Dual Enrollment/Early College Specialist position
 - ❑ Maine Central Community College offering credit for CRLS business courses
 - ❑ Conversations initiated with UMass Boston as potential partner
- ❑ **RSTA (Rindge School of Technical Arts)**
 - ❑ Evaluate current programs and add new Career Technical pathways*
**Provides skills and credentials to enable students to enter the workforce immediately upon graduation.*
- ❑ **Naviance Review** (college application and career planning software)
 - ❑ Naviance upped their game to match competitive vendors. It will be retained.

Postsecondary

- Internships expand
- Expand Early College
- RSTA eval and add
- Naviance Review (will be retained because they upped their program game)

Community Topics (time for people to recommend future topics)

Guidance counselors for seniors – they have worked hard on the recommendation letters

Vaping is still an issue according to parent reports; there are vape detectors in many bathrooms that admin is responding to. Cameras are also in the area so that also helps. Still work to be done, more to come.

Are improvement funds available: yes as far as aware.

Last meeting there was a very robust discussion about the move to all honors, there were steps that reach out to the community to get a pulse on how folks feel. YES – we can add to the next agenda so that there is ample time to discuss and to get input/feedback. Did not discuss today because of the packed agenda and wanting to make sure the topic had ample time.

Caregivers and educators gave thanks to GG for leadership and all of the accomplishments. And GG props to the team who have done the work too. It's a village.

WIN block, bus subcommittee (still looking for people)

October 22, 2025

Attending representatives: Allan Gately-Gahant, Tina Lieu, Cullen Buie, Casey Crosby, Sunny Gupta, Megan Laskarzewski, Alex Micolini, Marcella Millan, Nicole Sapienza,

(on Zoom): Sarah Atikem, Alex Bowers, Alysa Breyer, Connor Epsteinkraus, Sarah Fekadu, Nina Nolan, Lily Rayman-Read

(Lianne Fisman, Kitty Breen unable to attend due to illness)

Attendees: Anurag B, Azaria, Maria Collins, Jeff Gavronik, Jaspar, Arjun Jaikumar, Jia Jing Lee, Jamie Lichenstein, Sam M. Tabitha Howard

Online: Christian Roselund, Christine, Danielle, Diana, Elizabeth Hudson, Emily Pollock, Isabella Ehrlich, Jean, Joanne, Kai, Kelly Bugala, Lisa Downing, Luisa de Paula Santo, Nina Farouk, Paul, Sue Swalley

Note taker: Nina Farouk

Meeting info

- **In-person** at the principal's conference room at CRLS (near the main entrance)

- **Virtual on Zoom:**
<https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJKKkiYS5.1#success>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790
- [Link to tonight's slides](#)
- [Link to scratch pad](#)
- [Link to exit ticket/form for volunteering for a subcommittee](#)

Agenda

1. 6-6:05 - Announcements & Celebrations
2. 6:05-6:20 - School Council Location Discussion (rotating in-person location)
3. 6:20-6:25 - Attendance Violation Policy (and sick days not being exempt)
4. 6:30-6:45 - Input to State Graduation Requirement (aka, [Competency Determination](#))
5. 6:45-7:00 - Introduction to 21st Century Learning Subcommittee (for success in life)
6. 7:00-7:20 - Bike Safety Conversation
7. 7:20-7:40 - Movement to Honors Courses @CRLS
8. 7:40-7:50 - Community Questions: Accommodated Testing for Saturday SAT's, In School SAT for Seniors

Notes

Announcements & Celebrations

- CRLS Girls Crew had a historic performance at the Head of the Charles Regatta placing 10th of 86 in the Women's Youth Four notching a program best.
- Additional bike racks have been added outside CRLS, creating 60 more spaces, thanks to CRLS Bike Club's advocacy in response to bike theft issue brought up during the 2024-25 school council meetings.
- Nov. 6, 11am - 12:30pm: Volunteers needed for CRLS Food Pantry Clean up
- Nov. 6, 7pm: CRLS Family Connection community meeting on Zoom

School Council Location Discussion (rotating in-person location)

School Council Locations

Proposal to rotate the in-person meeting location

Why?

- Current participation has been heavily from students/families in 02138 & 02140
- CRLS serves all of Cambridge
- Holding meetings at other location enables different people to more easily attend in-person
- Virtual remains an option for attending
- In the past Principal Smith held School Council at different locations



←scratch pad. Leave any comments you have if you don't get to voice them. They will be added to the meeting notes.



Principal GG & co-chair, Tina Lieu, suggested holding SC meetings in various school locations.

Discussion points supporting other locations included:

- Parents felt that we do need to go into certain communities to welcome them to meetings and at least one parent would appreciate an SC meeting at CSUS
- If SC meetings are held in other locations, staff request parking exemptions for staff who are not Cambridge residents and without parking permits

Discussion points supporting remaining at CRLS included:

- A student added CRLS is as close to middle of Cambridge as possible
- Parents felt presence at CRLS mattered and also increased faculty participation
- A different framework: Think about bringing the people to the meeting vs bringing the meeting to the people, e.g. ride shares

- A parent who has been at school awhile remembers when meetings were held in different locations but didn't feel that it made a difference with attendance. Contact Principal Smith about their experience
- If SC meetings are moved to different location, there needs to be stronger communications about the new location

Attendees strongly supported the hybrid model, which would remain no matter the location:

- Some felt hybrid meetings were already good/robust; rather not drive around city
- A parent suggested holding meetings in the Media Lab for more sophisticated virtual meeting experience; with students to run and get service hours
- Many felt whatever location, hybrid option must continue to be robust; must make sure *students* can get to particular sites in good time and need to balance all voices - teachers, caregivers, students

Next steps:

Motions were put forward to:

- Pilot 1 meeting in new location this year, followed by discussion to make informed decision
- Try a new meeting location in January (December is busy)

Principal GG will: contact Principal Smith; look into parking exemption; try out tech at location. Report back in November for December meeting in new location

Attendance Violation Policy (and sick days not being exempt)

Attendance Policy

These absences do not count towards an Attendance Violation

- Observance of major religious holidays
- Legal requirement
(with documentation)
- Medical appointments (with documentation)
- College visits (limited to 3 days for grade 12, and 2 days for grade 11)
- School-sponsored/school-approved trips or activities
- School Service-Related Absences (i.e. guidance, counseling, testing, OSE, nurse's office)
- In School and Out of School Suspensions
- Family trip (One 5-day trip in 4 years)
- Bereavement

Questions

- What to do in case of illnesses that don't require a doctor's visit? (e.g. COVID, common cold)

Attendance Rules

- **Attendance Violation (AV)** for 7 or more class absences in a quarter
- **No Credit (NC)** for a class for 7 or more absences in a quarter, and 15 or more in a semester
- The number of AVs will determine whether a student earns credit for the class.
- One quarter is ~8 weeks long



scratch pad

Univ. of Chicago research on impact of attendance on graduation rate (see [slidedeck](#))

Previous attendance policy: families informed of student's absence; but no impact on grades or class credits. New attendance policy: potentially loss of course credit

Students asked to add this topic to the agenda to highlight problems with policies. Students feel that:

- New policy punishes students who have illnesses that don't need doctor's notes and are sick for too long
- Students are coming into school while contagious fearing attendance violation.
- Attendance policies don't impact actual attendance

Several staff (including SPED teacher) reported that historically CRLS's attendance is better with a policy that impacts grades; reported that this year attendance has improved with this current policy; and appreciate the thoughtfulness of this plan.

Attendees discussed there needs to be a path to excuse absences for illness without a doctor's note:

- Parents asked if there could be a compromise, specifically sick time should be excused. They also felt families may not want to pay for a doctor's visit just for a sick note.
- Parents wondered about the equity of access to doctors and reiterated the policy shouldn't encourage kids to come to school while sick.
 - If students need medical help, they can access the teen health center for free. They are able to write sick notes.
- Parents and staff talked about allowing a certain number of absences excused through family call-in and capping the number of times a family can call-in.
- Another parent shared they had read online that they could call to excuse a child's absence due to illness, but when they called the LC secretary they were told they needed a doctor's note.
 - Whatever the policy, the rules and how they are observed needs to be consistent across the school administration, on the school website and in formal communications. (Not currently the case.)
 - Student drew parallels between the implementation of grading for equity and new attendance policy. A lot of misunderstanding. In roll out, all stakeholders need to understand the policy.

Other issues discussed, included:

- A recent immigrant parent shared that some international students need to travel back to their home countries at the beginning and end of the school year. Do not need to be punished for this.
- Some students (who found it difficult to get to school) calculated that they could pass classes without attending. This seems like a problem with the class and not the policy.
- Data shows that many of the kids who are absent are often on IEPs/504s. What's holistic supports need to be in place? Are we figuring out why they aren't coming to school vs just punishing them for not coming to school?
- Attendees wanted to monitor:
 1. How do we implement this policy
 2. Who is tracking attendance data (do we call if kids don't come after a few days)

Next Steps:

Principal GG will look at the data - if doesn't move the needle then we're tackling the problem with the wrong solution;

Will also look into tardies being marked as absences - what should parents/students do in that case?

Input to State Graduation Requirement (aka, Competency Determination)

Input to State Graduation Requirements: Competency Determination (CD)

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Guidance Document on CD

Key Elements of CD

- Criteria for earning CD: equivalent of years of: ELA (2), Math* (2), Science** (1), and U.S. History (1)
- Considerations for
 - Special Education: Must meet CD and local requirements ([DESE memo](#))
 - English Learners
 - Late Enrolling Students (after 9th grade)
- Appeals Process
- Diploma requests for former non-grads
- Local CD publication and vetting

 scratch pad

* Algebra 1 and Geometry, totaling 2 yrs
** 1 year of Biology, Physics, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering.

School Council Actions

- Clarifying Questions
- Comments
- Suggestions

The CD is a **statewide graduation requirement** that ensures students demonstrate mastery in core academic areas. Since MCAS is no longer the sole measure, **now districts must define their own CD policies based on coursework and mastery.**

Students must earn full credit and demonstrate mastery through:

- Final assessments
- Capstone or portfolio projects
- Other district-defined measure

In the absence of MCAS, Massachusetts now requires each local school district to define Competency Determination (CD) needed to graduate.

CRLS is issuing diplomas for previous non-graduates who didn't get a diploma due to not passing MCAS.

There is a CRLS working group considering options.

- Staff noted that MCAS differed from other assessments because it was set externally rather than by teachers. Raised question about who will set the final assessment under the new system.
- Students questioned how new CD measures will impact class curriculum - will it require standardization of curriculum
- Staff emphasized that teachers work hard to help all students pass and that the CD guide should measure success beyond college-bound students.

- A parent brought up an example of a student who may be failing an AP but would have passed a lower level class in the same subject - how would such a case be measured for CD?

Suggestions for CD standards included:

- Staff advocated for a portfolio option and a principal discretion pathway to ensure flexibility and accommodate exceptions. They also proposed allowing students to choose between a final assessment or a capstone project.
- There was also a suggestion that Algebra taken in 8th grade should count toward graduation requirements.
- A student suggested measuring growth vs. static measure

Next Steps:

Principal GG and Tina Lieu to debrief and discuss next steps further.

Introduction to 21st Century Learning Subcommittee (for success in life)

CRLS launched a sub-committee to ensure what we're teaching students will equip them for rapidly changing world.

- Their vision is to gather research > talk to community > identify gaps and opportunities to effect education
- This will be a 2-year endeavor that will involve input from all stakeholders - parents, staff, student, industry
- Key trends:
 - More personal choice in building student's curriculum
 - Leaning into learning that includes human interaction
 - Not the right time for implementation > need buy in from community

Challenges: How do you prepare staff? How do you use tech responsibly?

Next steps

Get more people to join the sub-committee. Contact Cullen Buie (Cullen.buie@gmail.com) to join

Focus groups with stakeholders (see slide): teachers, students, caregivers, industry

Bike Safety Conversation

How to make our student bikers/scooters safer on the road

Observations

- Students not wearing helmets
 - Lack of helmets
 - Have helmets but don't wear
- Don't know rules of the road
- Many students bike to school for the first time in high school
- Need caregiver help to instill safe behaviors

Side note

- More students want to bike but lack bikes. Bike Giveback Program has CRLS students as high priority but don't get enough donated bikes to fix up.
 - Have an "old bike" drive?
 - Ask Cambridge Police/Public Works about abandoned bikes?



scratch pad

Education options

- [Tenzin Choephel](#) from Cambridge Community Development
- Able to put on evening workshop for families and students. Example: "Explore a Bike Safety Family Night" (safe urban cycling)
- After mid-November able to provide more in-depth educational programs during school hours (e.g., how to fix your bike, rules of the road).
 - Should this be part of Falcon Block, or WIN block?
- Partnerships & Collaboration
 - CRLS Bike Club - peer instructor & student engagement
 - RSTA or Art Club - design bicycle safety posters

The main issues are 1) students not wearing helmets; 2) students not knowing rules of the road; 3) trying to source more bikes for students

Introduced to [Tenzin Choephel](#) from Cambridge Community Development - Cambridge Transportation Dept, who runs bike education for 6th grade

- Offering workshops (road safety; bike maintenance); flexible about coming to events; providing information to students + parents/caregivers

1) Students not wearing helmets:

- Some don't wear helmets because they are not cool; for those with different hair styles or head shapes it may not be comfortable
- [Tenzin](#) can share a helmet fit guide with CRLS and/or speak about helmet for different hairstyles.
- There are also free helmets for Cambridge residents at City Hall Annex

2) Road safety education

- Although bike/road safety is offered in 6th grade, some students in CPS missed it due to COVID.
- There should be advocacy at the city level - collaboration between CRLS and the city/Cambridge Police Dept to enforce traffic rules around the high school, especially during the morning rush hour

Educational opportunities:

- Integrate bike/road safety into 9th grade required health/PE class (Parent requested to include scooter riding safety)
 - **Tenzin** is open to meeting with PE teachers
- Assemblies style info session
- Bike safety information/rules shared in the DYK newsletter that goes out to families; and can be linked to whatever community website is available for bike safety awareness.

3) Sourcing more bikes for students:

Bike Give Back program:

- Has CRLS students as high priority but do not have enough bikes
- Can the CRLS community coordinate a bike drive?

BlueBikes:

- User have to be 16+
- Offer discounted rates for high schoolers (\$25 for the year). Can CRLS subsidize in anyway?

Parent raised safety concern re: crossing at Broadway to school campus. It is chaotic and busy and **needs crossing guard or volunteer**.

- No adult presence. If student was involved in accident no adult made aware of situation or there to help
- Ariel Gibson volunteering to help at crossing. What can the parent community do to help?

Next Steps:

Principal GG to look into incorporating into 9th grade health/PE class

Principal GG will talk with safety (school or city?) about crossing guard at Broadway

Movement to Honors Courses @CRLS

Movement to Honors Courses

Agenda +
Notes



A Recent Timeline of Honors @ CRLS

- SY2000-2001: No Honors Courses at CRLS
- SY2001-2002: Honors Courses return to CRLS
- SY2017-2018: ELA9 became Honors only
- SY2018-2019: World History became Honors only
- SY2019-2020: Honors Calculus added to course catalog
- SY2020-2021: Honors Option* 9th Grade Physics became Honors only
- SY2023-2024: General Pre-Calculus effectively closed for Honors Pre-Calculus
- SY2024-2025: Fall Algebra 1A students all enrolled in Spring Honors Algebra 1

**Honors option = The class is "non-honors" unless you earn a certain minimum grade, in which case it is marked as "honors" on your transcript*

CRLS has progressively moved to honors-only or "leveled up" classes in several subjects (see timeline above):

- ELA and World History for 9th grade now taught as "Level Up" class - a year long class, with three teachers in the classroom, alternating between ELA and History curriculums
- Math: Precalculus was made honors-only as enrollment in standard-level classes fell;
- Math: SY2024-25 was first time full year algebra students were enrolled in Fall Algebra 1A and then Spring Honors Algebra 1 (instead of Spring Algebra 1B, i.e. non-honors, standard track)

Attendees participated in a lengthy and robust discussion. Some key points raised, included:

1. Definition of honors classes

- Students and parents questioned whether classes still qualify as “honors” if every student is enrolled in them.
- Parents felt making all classes honors was “diluting” them and that CRLS would lose families to independent schools with more rigorous honors programs

2. Rigor of Curriculum

- Many attendees understood an honors class as having a more rigorous and faster paced curriculum. Questioned if all classes are honors, are we making the class “slower” for kids who aren’t as prepared?
- Parents questioned if the new honors classes were rigorous enough to prepare students for AP/higher level classes, especially for students with less home support.
- Some staff felt the distinction was not about classifying classes as honors and non-honors but about how the curriculum is defined. It’s more important to have a curriculum that preps students for 21st century learning. E.g. 2010 had 33 students taking AP Chem > 2025 has 125 students taking AP chem; average grade on AP exam went from 3.5 to 4.05 (full score: 5) - but this has more to do with the curriculum and teacher teaching than the classification of “honors/AP”

3. Impact on Students

CRLS strong at giving strong students options BUT this structure may not be serving all students

- Several parents reported their students struggling in the advanced pace and intense workload of 9th grade Algebra 1 Honors. However, full year Algebra is presented as “remedial”. There seems to be no middle ground of a standard Algebra pathway.
- A parent (Boston U. STEM prof.) shared their experience with students that advance through classes where they don’t understand material. Putting them in position to fail. There’s no way to teach HN class “flatly” without holding back more advanced students.

CRLS is messaging that honors is the standard and anything below is unacceptable

- Further pushing the “all kids should go to college” narrative instead of valuing the many post-high school options students have.

Support for students

- In elementary and middle school, classes are heterogeneously grouped BUT multi-tiered supports exist to help struggling students, e.g. special educator teaching alongside class teacher. In CRLS, when we replace standard options with honors, we are still placing students in heterogeneous classes but without Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports. Not having choice of standard or honors classes will widen gaps.

Level Up Success

- Teachers praised the Level Up model – brings 3 educators into a single classroom every day all year; 24:3 ratio (or less) student to educator , allowing for significant individualization and intervention.
- Also provide a pathway into honors (and sometimes subsequently AP classes) for students who may not have realized they were capable of more rigorous classes
- But is this just for 9th grade? Does ELA/History for 10th grade also have 3 educators per class?

Alternative model

- Teacher shared that the class (heterogenous) they're currently teaching is "earned honors"; i.e. classified as an honors class on transcript if they receive B+ or more - it encourages students to practice revision and learn to strive. This model was good.

4. How the decision was made in the first place

Parents asked for clarification on how the initial decision to move to all honors classes was made.

- Principal GG shared that the impetus was to close disparities in MCAS outcomes, e.g.. disaggregated MCAS data showed students taking Algebra 2 or higher math class were passing Math MCAS at higher rates than students taking Geometry.
- A teacher responded that this seems like correlation/causation confusion. It's likely that strongest/high achieving students are opting into honors classes, and more likely to do well in MCAS. Not that taking an honors level class is raising up weaker students.

Teachers shared that many educators opposed the decision.

- Educators did not have a voice in the decision. They were notified of the decision and told it was “political”.

Parents stated their concern about how this decision was made.

- Don’t think it’s good to over value test scores as a sole metric
- Need to consider educator voices more strongly - Were the teachers given an opportunity to vote and voice their concerns about this transition?
- Don’t see pedagogy reason for all honors - What data was used to support the move to all honors besides the MCAS?
- Emphasized the irony that the move to honors model was made because of MCAS disparity, yet more kids are now struggling in honors classes and even more unlikely to score well in MCAS.

5. Communication

Several parents stated their frustration at lack of clear communication about academic pathways:

- One 9th grade parent had never heard of the Level-Up model and wanted to know how to learn what programs/pathways were available
- Another parent asked how kids were placed into 9th grade math classes - how were some kids placed into year long Algebra I and other not offered

6. Call for Change or Pause with moving to all honors

Strong sentiment that it ***should be a choice to take honors***

- Forcing honors doesn’t feel good as a teacher or a parent.
- Some students might feel overwhelmed.

For students:

- Is a placement test an option so that students entering an honors course can be assessed to determine if they are academically ready for this pacing/rigor, and if not, these students are given an option for a “regular” class? Rigor and speed are not the same, so if there are students

needing rigor allow them into the honors classes. Students should be able to have time and resources provided to fill prerequisite gaps before being forced into honors courses.

- If the goal is to get a more diverse group of students into honors classes, then figure out how to invite students who might not have considered honors into those courses. It might be as simple as a teacher telling them they think they can do it.

For parents/caregivers:

- Can a survey be sent to all stakeholders presenting the facts and figures of whether this move has even been successful so that everyone's voice can be heard and we can vote?

Next Steps

Principal GG: Look to gather more data about how community feels about honors classes - possibly with survey

Community Questions:

Accommodated Testing for Saturday SAT's, In School SAT for Seniors

A parent in the community is inquiring about accommodated testing for SATs. Their senior was unable to get an accommodated testing spot for Saturday with CRLS. Had to get spot in Brookline.

- For Saturday SAT testing, CRLS provides weekend eligible (per College Board (CB)) accommodations, e.g. extended time, extended breaks; but is not able to provide other accommodations, e.g. 1-on-1 testing, dictation, screen reader/speech-to-text - these are only available at school day/weekday testing.
- CRLS does not offer school day SAT testing for seniors (12th grade)

Next Steps:

Principal GG will look into the issues with College Board/SAT coordinator

WIN Block Sub Comm

- Looking for students available during Friday WIN Block to explore possibilities for students who don't have a specific academic need during WIN Block.

September 17, 2025

Attending representatives: Allan Gately-Gahant, Tina Lieu, Sarah Atikem, Alex Bowers, Kitty Breen, Cullen Buie, Sarah Fekadu, Lianne Fisman, Sunny Gupta, Megan Laskarzewski,

(on Zoom) Alysa Breyer, Connor Epsteinkraus, Alex Micolini, Marcella Millan, Nina Nolan, Lily Rayman-Read, Nicole Sapienza

Attendees: Isabella Ehrlich, Jodi, Nina Farouk, Anurag, Jasper, Sam, Sak, Azaria, Sam

Zoom: Christine Mastal, Danielle, Jacqueline Gibbs, Kim Bostic-Williams, Lina Joseph, Melissa Maldonado Garcia, Roman, Sibylle Dyer, Suzette Sajjabi, Tabithalee

Note taker: Nina Farouk

Meeting info

- **In-person** at the principal's conference room at CRLS (near the main entrance)
- **Virtual on Zoom:**
 - <https://cpsd-us.zoom.us/j/98066616241?pwd=FbeEP38uuNld23brWbYYjhJKKkIYS5.1#success>
 - Meeting ID: 980 6661 6241
 - Passcode: 697790

[Link to tonight's slides](#)

[Link to scratch pad](#)

[Link to exit ticket/form for volunteering for a subcommittee](#)

Agenda

1. General Announcements and Celebrations
2. School Council Elected Representatives
3. School Council Purpose

4. Family Engagement
5. Updates on SY2425 SC Topics
6. Subcommittees for SY2526
7. SIP Update
8. Community Questions: Lunch at HSEP

Notes

General Announcements and Celebrations

- First Celebrating Disability Pride Event, Oct 4 @ park of Cambridge Main Library
- 10 CRLS students spending the year doing original research w/astrophysicists
- CRLS History classes have been exploring conflict resolution - and managed to resolve the American Revolution without going to war.
- HSEP Back to School Night was warm and nurturing.

School Council Elected Representatives (18 members)

Current School Council Members

Student Representatives:		Staff Representatives:	
 Sara Atikem (12th)	 Sarah Fekadu (12th)	 Allan Gately Gehant, Interim Principal & Co-chair <i>agatelygegant@cpsd.us</i>	 Sunny Gupta (Chemistry)
			 Lily Rayman-Read (History)
Parent/Caregiver Representatives:		Special Educators	
 Tina Lieu (9th, 11th) caregiver co-chair <i>tinalieu@gmail.com</i>	 Lianne Fisman (11th & 2024 grad)	 Dr. Alysa Breyer (Math)	 Nicole Sapienza
	 Alex Bowers (10th)	 Casey Crosby (SCALE Program)	 Megan Laskarzewski
 Marcela Millan (11th)	 Cullen Buie (9th)		
 Alex Micolini (9th)	 Kitty Breen (12th, HSEP)	Community Representatives:	
		 Connor Epsteinkraus (Cambridge Public Health Department)	 Nina Nolan (Office of Workforce Development)

School Council (SC) Purpose

1. Adopting educational goals for the school
 2. Assist in identifying educational needs of students
 3. Collaborate with school community and staff to form an annual School Improvement Plan (SIP)
 4. Review the school budget
- There will be areas/items SC cannot discuss, e.g. contract negotiations or personnel.
 - How much sway does SC have? SC holds thoughtful discussions, but at times may need School Committee to enact on new items/policies
 - Elevating issues above School Committee to district level: SC has had past difficulties contacting the district even with Principal Gately Gehant's assistance; hope that open communications are better this year

Subcommittees for SY2526

Last year SY2425, subcommittees came about organically from areas of concern in feedback through the caregiver SC election ballots:

1. Opportunity Gap/Equity
2. 9th grade transition
3. Teen Health
4. Math

We discussed some new areas of concerns and possible focuses for SY2526 subcommittees:

1. Special Education

- How can we integrate kids on IEPs more thoroughly into school?

2. Family Engagement

- with focus on families for whom English is not first language

3. Transportation (Busing) & Communication

- Most CRLS students use MBTA (in 3rd year of this program)
- Busing this year continues to be a problem for all schools with kids arriving chronically late. On 9/17 there were 374 tardy students in the morning. Attendees shared experiences, including:
 - Busses (#83) from North Cambridge always late due to traffic; shuttling during red line shutdown was especially bad
 - A student missed AP exam even though they left their home 1-hr early
 - The 47 route in Cambridgeport needs more buses and/or connecting routes
- Transportation for students getting to/from sports after school is also an issue
 - There isn't enough time to take the bus
 - Sports practice venues are not on bus route (e.g. crew)
 - Could there be buses to get kids to sports?
- Communications
 - MBTA sends daily updates of routes that are really running late. How is information disseminated to students/families?
 - CRLS plans on sending out Google form survey to find out transportation barriers to arriving on time
- Can Cambridge City Transportation Board assist?
- We explored bike options:
 - Blue Bikes
 - Cambridge Bike Give Back - gives bikes to CRLS students as often as possible, but need bikes donated

Additional Communication issues

- Some parents are not receiving emails from schools. Current system can only send to Parent 1 listed email (and not to both Parent 1 and Parent 2 listed email.) Can emails be sent to both parents/caregivers?

4. Rethinking Education & AI

- PE requirement
 - by 11th grade only kids left in PE are kids who aren't on sports teams > missing out on other opportunities
- Lack of opportunities for high achieving students (large % of family survey responses)
 - Many families don't know about opportunities, e.g. Harvard Extension
 - Improve communication
 - Need to be aware of response bias; many families responding have high achieving students
- Educating students beyond highschool
 - Kids are overloading themselves to get into competitive colleges but they are not learning/lack basic skills to succeed in college and beyond. How do we educate students to enter the world with AI?
 - Students come into class with deep interest but scheduling issues lock students out of classes they're interested in
 - How to build more robust heterogeneous classes? When done well, allows students to engage in deeper thinking
- AI
 - Disparity in understanding on correct use of AI at home.
 - 1x Staff development module will focus on how to use AI effectively in class
 - Embracing RSTA and trades; additional RSTA pathways, e.g. electrical & plumbing

- Post secondary options besides college
 - *Post meeting follow up info: Credit for Life event (June 2025, run by Jennifer Sloan Green --RSTA Business Educator & Business Club (DECA) Advisor -- with support from Jacqui Cesari) where students learn about career paths and what kind of lifestyle they will be able to afford.*
 - *“Credit For Life-Financial Literacy Fair” to expose every CRLS student to financial literacy education and offer fun practice activities using the National Financial Literacy Standards on topics including money management, budgeting, credit scores, and investing for the future.*
 - *Alice Beth Fitzpatrick is the Career Connected Learning manager for the district*
- After school tutoring/Additional support for students with IEPs/504s (beyond pull-outs and teacher support during the school day)
- How do we get data? So we’re able to support the highest need first
 - Post check in/Google form to students

Progress Since Spring 2025

Progress since Spring 2025

Agenda +
Notes



Vaping:

- Detectors for bathrooms purchased and installation underway.
- 17 staff trained in iDecide facilitation. 24 more to be trained on September 29th.

Cell Phones:

- YONDR Pouches being distributed Thursday and Friday this week; program begins Monday, 9/22/25

Guidance Program:

- Two new counselors hired
- All counselors converted to 9-12 grade

AP Testing:

- Weeks 1 & 2 Testing will be at the Longfellow Building
- Total Registration targeted for Fall 2026
- Focus on 100% AP students joining AP Classroom and back end set up of tests to avoid Spring 2025 errors

Caregiver Academy:

- Working Group formed
- Dates and topics selected for the monthly experiences with first session delivered 9/11/25

Vaping:

- Detectors - placed in areas where easier to identify vape user and not just students in bathroom, e.g. not multi-stall bathrooms

- Students are now *more* worried about using bathrooms and being punished by association. Created a culture of fear. Detectors and policy needs to be communicated to assuage fears.

Cell Phones:

- YONDR pouches distributed Thu & Fri; program begins Mon. 9/22
- Students will hold on to YONDR pouches until end of year
- YONDR replacement cost \$20
- YONDR alerted that dismissal will be bottle neck time; CRLS purchased additional unlocking magnets for additional coverage
- We discussed the following questions:
 - Fake phones in YONDR? End goal to not see phones in class; realistically won't be 100% compliance but having YONDR helps signal importance of no-phone campus
 - Why will students be allowed phones during lunch? CRLS is an open campus - realistically unable to monitor YONDR use off campus; also providing an outlet as students navigate transition
 - Back up plan? CRLS will solicit feedback from students, teachers, and families about roll out.
 - Opportunity to talk to students/ have students reflect about mental health without phones? Staff think they can build conversation into Falcon Block
- YONDR alternatives in other districts:
 - Doorman App (Watertown piloting) - app on students' phones > QR code into class > "bricks" phone during class > unlocks at the end of class period; if opt out phones not allowed in school; principal has ability to "brick" or unbrick all phones in case of emergency

Guidance Program

- Seniors who got new counselor also have previous counselor supporting

AP Testing

- May 1st and 2nd week testing will be at Longfellow building
- Move over from My School Bucks to Total Registration for AP test payment targeted for Fall 2026 (requires City finance department approval of new point of sale app)
- Teachers to ensure every student in an AP class is enrolled in “AP classroom”
- For this year, fail safe system built (while still using My School Bucks) to ensure students both registered and paid

Caregiver Academy

- Initiated by Cambridge Families of Color Coalition
 - Specifically to support black and brown students and students with additional needs
 - Caregivers work as partners with educators and treated as experts when it comes to their students
- Principal Gately Gehant is finalizing staff to collaborate on Caregiver Academy on Thu. 9/18 staff meeting

Progress since Spring 2025 (Continued)

Health 2 Course:

- 139 students enrolled across six sections for SY2526 following last year's pilot section

5th Annual Bridge to CRLS:

- 360 9th graders attended on 8/28/25 (170 didn't)

Bike Racks:

- CRLS Bike Club collaborating with administration to source additional bike racks (DPW or state vendor TBD)



scratch pad

Gemini and AI:

- Staff professional development Module for SY2526 focused on AI in teaching and learning.

New Attendance Policy:

- Approved by School Committee in August
- Presented to staff and students in opening days of the school year.

CRLS Family Connection:

- Established caregiver-led group to help caregivers connect and navigate CRLS, run School Council elections <https://crlsfamilyconnection.org>
- **CRLS Family Guidebook** produced and reviewed by CRLS staff and distributed to class of 2029 in March 2025

Bike Racks

- Discussed at recent School Committee and City Council meetings. Working on getting more racks to CRLS to address issue of bikes being stolen repeatedly

CRLS Family Connection

- Family Guidebook will be reprinted this year in time for January Rising 9th Grade info session

SIP: Family Engagement

Agenda +
Notes



Add Two Additional School Counselors & Shift to 9-12 Guidance Model:

Following the NEASC Dec 2023 visiting team report, CRLS will pivot to an all 9-12 grade Guidance Model. Adding the additional two counselors will also reduce caseload averages from their current level of 200. School Counselors are often the first point of contact for families on a variety of issues. Having the same person for four years and less families per counselor will strengthen program delivery.

Continue & Expand Parent Workshop Offerings:

SY24-25 had three parent workshops centering on 9th grade families but open to all: 9th grade parent orientation 9/12/24, 9th grade scheduling night on 3/16/25, and Generation Anxiety Night 3/20/25. These workshops will be delivered again with an addition of at least three more workshops in SY 2025-2026 working towards the goal of a Caregiver Academy helping onboard families to the systems of CRLS.

Continual Improvement on Existing Systems:

General communications with families (frequency, lead time, modes), Curriculum Nights, Conferences, Parent Coffees, Monthly Principal Bulletins, CRLS website, and gather feedback and continually review these and other school to family communication systems to be more linked to learning and making CRLS more welcoming. E.g. publication of half day and holiday calendar for CRLS.

Family Engagement

- Principal Gately Gehant attended training at Family Institute @ Harvard; helped shift his view on family engagement: ***Family engagement is not a goal, it's a strategy***
- CPSD needs translations of all communications (at least to 6 priority languages);
 - Posts through Parent Square auto translates to chosen language
 - But communications through Aspen aren't translated
 - Somerville High School transition events have had translators on hand
 - Calendar across modalities should all be synched, so bilingual family liaisons are aware of events and can be on hand
 - AI useful for translation, e.g. DeepL

SIP: School Climate

Implementation of What-I-Need (WIN) Block:

Balance Block Fridays and some additional Falcon Block Thursdays will be converted into WIN blocks in School Year (SY) 2025-2026. Students and staff will be able to schedule sessions via My Flex Learning or a similar application to schedule sessions of support or enrichment. The application will work with ASPEN for attendance purposes, and students and staff will have agency in creating targeted sessions for student improvement including expanding our current Mentoring program into a WIN option.

Schedule Audit:

It has been twenty years since CRLS adopted the Block schedule. Any high school schedule has its strengths and weaknesses. CRLS will contract with a third party to help review how our current schedule works and give recommendations about potential revisions to it and or alternative options

I-decide Trainings and Implementation to Address Vaping:

In summer 2025 additional staff will be trained in I-decide, and weekly sessions will be offered in SY2025-2026 every week of four or more days to support students in need.

SIP: Math

Continued Revision of Math Move Up Program:

SY2024-2025 marked the first year that all fall Algebra 1A* students moved up to Honors Algebra 1 in the spring term, which led to a 50% reduction in Geometry A requests for next year. SY2025-2026 will be the second year of that transition taking place as well as expanding to Geometry A* moving up to Honors Geometry in spring 2026.

**Refers to full year Algebra 1 A&B, full year Geometry A&B*

Expanding Advanced Math Options & Clear Pathways:

SY2025-2026 has over 80 requests for Multivariable Calculus, which is currently being offered by CRLS. Explorations will continue to be made to create opportunities including reviewing pre-requisites and recommendation practices for students reaching college-level math classes to do so in ways bearing college credit whether via dual enrollment or early college partnerships. Work will also be done to ensure that there is more documentation available to the community around all the multiple methods of engaging in mathematics at CRLS.

Continued Collaboration with Upper School Math Partners:

As CPS math continues on its pathway to provide Algebra 1 in 8th grade beginning in SY2026-2027, CRLS math will continue to plan for the impacts of the curricular shifts made in the upper school programs.

- More students taking calculus in 9th or 10th grades; many are taking multivariate are 11th
- Harvard extension program:
 - Harvard schedule is difficult to match with CRLS schedule;
 - Unable to get official grade from Harvard transcript; Principal Gately Gehant is pressing for official partnership to allow for Harvard transcripts
 - Could there be some positive PR for Harvard with offering classes to local public school?

SIP: Literacy

Level Up Expansion to Multilingual Learners:

Beginning in SY2025-2026, CRLS will run sections of Level Up English 9 and World History, in which an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor will join the teaching team to support the main streaming of ESL learners in to those classes.

AP Seminar Exploration:

The CRLS English Department's 10th grade team will take the SY2025-2026 school year to review and consider adopting AP Seminar as an option for 10th graders. The course has been adapted by College Board for just such use and already implemented in other districts. If the review ends in the affirmative, implementation would begin in SY2026-2027.

Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) College Writing Expansion:

Dual enrollment for BHCC is on the verge of doubling in SY2025-2026. Support of this expansion as well as pursuing Early College status with BHCC will be a priority in 2025-2026 so further expansion is possible in SY2026-2027.

AP Seminar Exploration

- Teacher team is Considering AP seminar option for 10th grade
- A teacher in attendance stated that we need to take advantage of the strength of the middle school ELA curriculum and give 9th/10th grade students opportunities to take higher level classes. Structure of pre-reqs of when students are allowed to take higher level classes is barrier.

Bunker Hill CC

- Principal Gately Gehant is pursuing expanding from dual enrollment partnership to Early College enrollment partnership (as Early College is cheaper for CPS)

SIP: Post Secondary Pathways

Internships:

Expand opportunities for and communication of student internships via the existing CRLS courses of Senior Internship, Marine Science Internship, Science and Engineering Internship, Co-op, and School to Work.

Early College & Dual Enrollment Expansion:

A new Dual Enrollment/Early College Specialist position will be created to support existing college class enrollment including 177 BHCC seats, 150 Lesley seats, 42 Harvard Extension seats, and 5 Ben Franklin Cummings seats in SY2025-2026. SY206-2027 will show continued growth of student enrollment and official partnerships and familiarity with these programs among families before grade 9 course selection.

RSTA:

Continued evaluation of current programming as well as work towards identifying and securing funding to add new Career Technical pathways to CRLS's current offerings in SY2025-2026. Implementation of new programming is targeted for SY2026-2027.

Naviance Replacement:

First year implementation of a new College application and career planning software will implement with Naviance in SY2025-2026. Naviance will sunset entirely in SY2026-2027.

RSTA

- New program: inventing rotation; in partnership with MIT Leminson Center's
- What's barrier to having more seats for 9th graders take RSTA Exploratory
 - Currently has 200 seat with 250-275 requests
 - Offering another program adds 15 seats
 - Somerville High School: 90% of 9th grade class take exploratory;
Attleboro: everyone takes it
 - Students can take RSTA classes without taking exploratory; they can explore areas of interest by setting up visits to the classes via guidance counselor
- Expand RSTA programs add more trade options, e.g. plumbing, electrical, HVAC
- Educate parents about what is acceptable post HS career pathways (not just college)

Naviance Replacement

- There are better packages offering more robust college and non-college preparation options
- As a school better need to improve pathways/communications about non-college options after CRLS

Community Questions:

1. **Lunch at HSEP:** Students can order from the CRLS menu, meals get delivered to them from CRLS - working well.
2. **iReady data:** how to leverage data gathered in middle school to use in CRLS
3. **Career pathway info to 9th graders?** There is already a good website. See [CRLS guidance department website](#)

Suggested topics for October School Council Meeting (collated and summarized)

Equity

- Access to AP's: in Humanities there is more gatekeeping on access to higher level classes
- Translation in all communications. ParentSquare vs Aspen/Follett
- Leveraging and engaging bilingual family liaisons at all events (organization of calendar, outreach to communities in more traditional way, building trust)
- Access to SAT: CRLS doesn't offer Saturday SAT spots for students with disabilities, consider adding a fall SAT test date for seniors in future years

Leveraging community partnerships

- Bridge 2 CRLS
- Youth Equity Summit
- Club advisors
- Trainings for student mentors

School Policies and Climate Updates

- Absence policy
- Climate survey
- Vaping
- Guidance counselors for seniors
- Club funding
- Schedule audit
- CRLS moving to an "all honors" format
- Update on YONDR rollout
- CPHD Datawalk (Teen and Middle Grade Health Survey aka. YRBS)
- Post secondary pathways:
 - options for non college
 - RSTA as an asset - AI proof!
 - How college and technical opportunities interact in career paths

Communications

- Zoom link with date time in every School Council announcement
- Senior Night was not on DYK, did not note caregivers can attend either session
- AP exams communications - Need chronological timeline with references for how to do what needs to be done for caregivers and students;
- Push notification for those eligible for reduced exam fees