Maria L. Baldwin School Council **85 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA 02138**

September 24, 2026

Baldwin School Council Minutes September 2026

7:45 - 8:45 a.m.

School Council Members in Attendance

Parent Members: Sarah Happel, Matt Meyersohn, Jen Nigro, Chunying Yue (co-chair)

School Staff Members: Robin Harris (principal chair), Elena Haro, Karin Kugel, Sara Oliveira, Susan Tiersch

Absent Members: Ben Geiger, Jackie Hayes, Corianne LaBounty, Andrew Verardo

Also in attendance: Arjun Jaikumar (Cambridge School Committee member)

Agenda

- Review Baldwin School Improvement Plan (SIP), review last year's SIP budget, and review process for determining how the SIP budget is set
- Topics to explore for future meetings

Housekeeping

Notes for the May and June meetings were submitted and approved by co-chairs Heidi and Chunying. Minutes are posted on the School Council webpage.
School Council webpage.

School Council Norms

Be here now and stay present.
Learn together.
Ground statements in evidence or examples.
Listen, ask, contribute and create space for others to do the same.
Follow through on commitments, seek support when needed and help others do the same.
Look for positive intent and take responsibility for your impact.

School Council Responsibilities

Review of the responsibilities in the Cambridge Public Schools' School Council Handbook.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is built on what is happening at a district level. The school's goals are aligned with the district goals.
English Language Arts (ELA), Math, School Climate and Family Engagement are the priorities of the district.
Each school receives a budget to help with their SIP.

Last year, the SIP budget for Baldwin was approximately $75,000. That money was spent on sub coverage while teachers are at professional development, instructional materials, computer software licenses, salaries for afterschool clubs and tutoring.

Question: Why does curriculum and instructional materials come out of the SIP budget? Shouldn't that be encumbered from the district budget?
Most of the funding comes from the district budget, but in some cases if the teachers are looking for additional curriculum, that will come from SIP (for example: Wayfinder SEL curriculum).

Question: Is there anything this year that needs to be included/thought about in this SIP budget?
Some of the monies already spent has to do with school leadership transition. This summer, Mr. Roderick, Mrs. Thompson (ELA Coach) and Mrs. Lynch (Math Coach) were given a stipend to work on the schedule and work with Robin to get ready for the school year.
There may be the possibility of some funding required for a Ben Q board in the art room.
Baldwin has a tremendous Friends group who were instrumental last year in helping find a visiting music teacher to help with music class coverage.
The Instructional Leadership Team, made up of faculty from various pockets, meet weekly to help create the SIP, making suggestions such as tutoring, things that tie to the SIP goals. Starting this month, ILT will start discussions about SIP. They look at data from screeners and assessments to guide them.

One area of focus is multilingual families. We have an increased number of EL students. Last year, Ms. Maeve Whitty, our ELL teacher, had a session with EL families to make connections and learn math games. This year, Ms. Whitty met with families before and during Back to School Night, along with coaches Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Lynch.

Baldwin enrollment is at 410 students this year. We've just about exhausted the waitlist. (As of the posting of these notes, enrollment increased to 413.)
The makeup of the school enrollment: 2 preschool classrooms, 4 kindergarten classrooms, and then 3 classrooms in grades 1 - 5.

Question: Does that mean there will be four (4) first grade classrooms next school year?
No. Although kindergarten classes are capped at 20, our kindergarten enrollment total is capped at 75 students to ensure that there will not be an additional first grade classroom created next year. The teacher's contract states that the number of students in a classroom in grades 1 - 8 does not exceed 25.

Topics to Explore

- Discussion around the food policy for events
- Family engagement - how to address "asks" and expectations so that staff may be able to serve all parents equitable
- Process for the principal search and the role of the School Council
- Playground improvements or possible expansion (behind the school) to accommodate the increased number of students

Glows & Gratitude

Baldwin has been in the news lately - for good reasons. MCAS results and recess time.
Ms. Harris wanted to give a shout out to the Baldwin community for their MCAS results. This is something to celebrate. Teachers and staff work incredibly hard. They are GOOD! We are striving to move to great, making sure that all students have rising test scores.
Here are the MCAS results by grade for the district schools:

Grade 3
Grade 4
Grade 5

Cambridgeday article about MCAS: https://www.cambridgeday.com/2026/09/22/mcas-improves-gaps-widen/

Recess time: The Boston Globe had an article about students needing 30 minutes of recess. Baldwin has 30 minutes of recess time for all grades.

Next Meeting: *Thursday, October 15*
8:30 - 9:15 a.m. in the Baldwin Cafeteria (this meeting was initially scheduled for 7:00 p.m. as a virtual meeting)
Agenda: Review of Student ELA & Math Reports. Math and Literacy Coaches will explain the reports and give advice on how to support your student.

2026-2027 School Council Meeting Schedule

October 15 - 8:30 - 9:15 a.m. - Cafeteria
November 19 - 7:30 a.m.
December 17 - 7:00 p.m. (virtual meeting)
January 21 - 7:30 a.m.
February 25 - 7:30 a.m.
March 18 - 7:00 p.m. (virtual meeting)
April 15 - 7:30 a.m.
May 27 - 7:30 a.m.
June 10 - 7:00 p.m. (virtual meeting)

School council meetings follow Open Meeting Law. Meetings are open to all.
For morning meetings, students are always welcome to come to the library and may go to the cafeteria for breakfast at 8:00 or they may stay in the library until the bell rings at 8:30. Parents are welcome to come when they can, leave when they wish. It's a great way to hear from school leadership and get to know other parents.