



# FINANCE COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

6:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber

### The Finance Committee will hold a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2022 budget

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Timothy J. Toomey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the FY2022 submitted budget and appropriation orders.
2. A communication was received from Kenneth N. Salim, Ed.D., Superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools, transmitting a presentation for the May 19, 2021 Finance committee meeting.



**CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE**

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MAY 19, 2021

6:00 PM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** With that, all of today's votes will be by roll call. Mr. Clerk.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Present

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Present

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Present

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Present

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Present

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Present

**Present-8, Absent-1. Quorum established.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.  
Madam Co-Chair, do you wish to offer some opening comments?

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Co-Chair. First of all, it's a pleasure to be back here as we discuss the City's overall budget, in particular, the School Department's budget.

I see, and it's always a pleasure to be in the presence of our co-legislative body, the School Committee, so I want to acknowledge and welcome Co-Chair Bowman and

Fantini and other members of the School Committee that I can't see, but I hope that are--are with us.

And thank you for, um, the time, attention, and the work that you've put into putting this fiscal budget together. I know it's not been hard.

There's a particular note to the superintendent's narrative in the budget book and where we talked about the imperfect options and talked about how this year under COVID-19 has been quite--quite a struggle. And we all realize that.

And we have all worked hard individually and collectively. But this budget, in the City Budget, in general, really speaks to the City's commitment to our community, and for both of us, the commitment to our families and to all of our citizens.

So, the budget process is really an important part of showing our city and our families, and in particular to the children, what our values are, and how we make those values crystal clear and important. And it also reaffirms that how we feel about families, their needs, and our commitment and support of them.

Before yielding the floor, though, I do want to add,

as I was reading through the budget narratives, and Mr. Chair, I beg your indulgence on this 'cause I just want to reference the city budget for a moment.

On Page 2-5 of the City Budget and then on the School Department's Budget, Page 48, they call it City of Cambridge Key Facts and Figures, uh, the narratives read pretty much the same.

And so this is not to say anything to the School Department, even though I'm saying it at the School Department budget, going forward when we do write this-- this narrative, I take particular interest that it talks about--where is it? "The Cambridge first was settled in 1630 by a group of Massachusetts Bay Company, was originally incorporated as a town in 1636 and became a city," et cetera, et cetera, and that same paragraph as in the School Department's Budget.

I've been going to a number of city meetings, and more and more folks, uh, groups, committees, organizations have acknowledged that the land that Cambridge is founded on is native land, that this is the land of the mass--the tribes of the Massachusetts, the--in the Wampanoag land that we stole or cheated.

And I think it'd be imperative going forward that we do not give a pro-Anglican version in our--in our city narratives about our founding and acknowledge that that's part of our history and that's part of our story.

And so going forward, I'm hoping and again I'm saying this to the city side of the aisle as well as the School Department going forward. If we talk about diversity, inclusion, and I want to also say, truth, then we really should be acknowledging that. So that's just important for me going forward that we--we mention these important factors.

I do have several questions. I'm going to yield the floor, Mr. Chair, so that we can go back to the--to hearing from my colleagues the questions as it pertains to the budget.

I do think it's important to, um, say again, I always look forward to being, uh, and having the opportunity to discuss the schools with my collective body, the School Committee, and as I said in our meeting, um, yesterday, that we may be we may often disagree, but as long as we keep in mind that we're here for one purpose, and that's the purpose of educating children, supporting families, uh,

and making sure that we have good and positive outcomes, that's important.

And then the only last thing, I said was going to be the last thing, but this is actually the last thing. As I was reading through the budget, and it talked about what we're doing for families, when we talked about diversity, um, and inclusion, we talked about social workers and things of that nature, there seems to be a theme that troubles me. And it's that we're looking at certain populations of people, uh, from particular neighborhoods or ethnic backgrounds through the eyes of a deficit.

And I really want us to start looking at how we look at individuals in our city through a positive prism, a positive glass.

Because if we think of them as being at a deficit, we treat them that way. And so, as we have our discussion going forward, I want us to think very positively that we have parents and children that have struggles, but that has nothing to say about their character, who they are and how they are formed.

And I just want--that was really heavy on my mind as I read this particular budget narrative when they kept going

about families in need, families in need.

So, I want to flip that, "Families that we would like to make sure have as much support as possible," is a better way of saying it, as opposed to saying the glass is half empty, I like to think of the glass being half full. With that, Mr. Chair, I will yield the floor. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Madam Co-Chair. We have the full School Committee and, uh, Administration Representatives with us.

Um, Madam Mayor and Mr.--and Madam Chair of the budget, do either of you wish to have a statement?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** I'll just start briefly and pass it over to my colleagues. I want to thank Co-Chair Carlone and Simmons, who met with the school budget Co-Chairs, vice Chair Bowman and Member Fantini, and myself along the process.

I want to acknowledge my colleagues here tonight as well, Member Weinstein and Member Rachel, Member Wilson, Member Rojas as well.

And just say that we know it's been a very challenging year for all, and especially for our schools, uh, our students, our families, our SPF staff.



Everyone from food service workers to our custodians, uh, to all our educators have gone through, um, a lot this year.

So, you'll hear today a theme, um, around recovery and thriving. Um, and you'll hear that there is a lot of work to do.

Uh, and so, much of this last year has been around reopening of schools, adjusting to a new way of being. Um, and there have been a lot of challenges.

So, I really do want to take this moment to acknowledge my colleagues on the School Committee, um, the budget Co-Chairs for the School Committee, Vice-Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, for their work, uh, alongside the school administration, um, and shepherding this budget process, um, along.

In addition to the many things this entire Body has been involved with, um, this year. So, I look forward, uh, to hearing the questions and comments from, um, our colleagues on the Council. And I'll pass it over to Vice-Chair Bowman and Member Fantini.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Vice Chair, Welcome.

**MONIKKA BOWMAN:** Thank you. Um, and thank you, Mayor

Siddiqui, and thank you to both of the Co-chairs of the Budget for having us here at this annual meeting to discuss, um, our budget for the School District.

It's no secret that the School Committee has been deeply immersed in very challenging, difficult work that we probably never would have imagined that we would be in a position to have to address, particularly as, um, leaders in a school setting as a result of COVID.

Um, but leadership, you don't get to choose the moment the moment choose you. And so, as a body, we have really come together to tackle all the many issues that have impacted us as a Committee, and a part of that is this budget, and being able to keep it on track to make sure that we engage the public, despite the challenges of COVID-19 and being able to deliver it to this Body so we can have a robust conversation regarding the challenges that we have faced up to this point and the vision that we want to move forward, um, through the context of this budget, laying the foundation for recovery and really being able to meet the needs of all of our students.

So, I am grateful to do this work in collaboration with my Co-Chair, Member Fantini, as well as the members of

the School Committee that's gathered here today.

It takes every single last one of us to move this budget process forward, and we are really pleased to be before you today to have the conversation based on the dedication and work we did with, um, the community to bring this forward.

I'll just say one last thing, there's been a lot of pain that has come out of, um, living through COVID-19, but one upside that came out of it was the ability to leverage technology as a tool to engage more people in the community regarding our budget.

Last year, Member Fantini and I in support--in support of the School Committee tried to be more intentional about moving our conversations about the--the budget into the community.

We did not get the responses that we wanted to, but we did put a first step in, moving it out of the School Committee hearing room and pushing it out into the community.

I'm really happy to report, because of the COVID-19, um, crises, we were able to really leverage a digital platform and more people were a part of the process.

And so, I am hoping that despite all the pain that has taken place in COVID, that we're able to hold on to some of the good things, which is digital engagement, which will allow for us to have more community involvement on a really important topic, such as the budget and other issues that face our school district.

So, I will pass it over to my Co-Chair, Member Fantini. But before that, I want to end by just thanking my colleagues that's here.

You know, we put in a lot of hard work to bring this budget forward, in addition to all the other many tasks that were placed upon us during this year, and I just want to thank them for their dedication and commitment to the community and to our families. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Co-Chair Fantini, welcome.

**ALFED FANTINI:** Thank you--thank you, Co-Chair Carlone and Co-Chair, Simmons. Um, I think--I think my colleagues have said it well, but let me just make some just really brief off the cuff comments.

It's been--it's been a very trying year and a challenging year, but--but I would say what--what has

centered the work of all of us in the--in the Cambridge public schools is we've centered on students.

Um, and--and by doing that, we're in a place today where all of our schools are open to children, which I think is a--is a, um, an accomplishment that most other school systems in Massachusetts, or even in the country, can't say.

Um, we did that--we--and I--and I think in part, and I part, our school system has become a better school system, um, experiencing this pandemic.

We--we are in a better place, we'll be in a better place next year with the skills we've learned how to make decisions and the skills we've learned how to work as a team moving us forward.

Um, School Committee, I was proud of our School Committee. We knew that to center students that we had to work together as a team, and we did.

And not all of us agree on issues, um, together, but we knew as a team we would be stronger and -- and that has moved us forward in a very positive way.

Our leadership team has worked seven days a week since this pandemic started, they've never stopped, they've never

stopped giving of themselves and trying to do what's best for students.

And as the mayor said, every single staff person we have, that the Mayor mentioned, has stepped up, um, to serve our children, um, in--in very powerful ways. Um, and in that effort, we have seen so much creativity from our students.

I mean, at the Goldman School, you saw how--how teachers developed, um, on their own, put forward, you know, a way of teaching our students remotely and in-person at the same time, which was just great innovation on their part.

Um, we had parent doctors who originally supported us in making some really critical decisions. We've had the support of the city, under the leadership of the City Manager and the City Council and providing us the support we needed financially for us to work through this. And we've had the really confident support of the Cambridge Health Department.

And so, um, and--and there were more important decisions we made in this one year than in the other 37 years I've--I've -- I've worked on this--that I've been an

elected member of the School Committee. And it just--it just has positioned us to be a better school system, to be a better School Committee as we move forward.

So, you know, we've negotiated four union contracts, I think, through this effort. [coughing] It was, quite frankly, all hands-on deck, um, everybody working at their--at their best selves that has put us in this position today, um, to say that our schools are opening, we're doing well and we're still making decisions after decisions.

And so, um, it's with that brief introduction, I hope that, um, our presentation and--and we look forward to engaging the City Councillors in some serious discussion about how our system moves forward. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, all three of you, for what you do. Superintendent Salim, do you wish to open comments?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Sure. Thank you, Councillor Carlone, and thank you, Councillor Simmons, and, um, your Co-Chairs, Vice Chair Bowman, Member Fantini and Mayor Siddiqui for the opening remarks.

Um, so I'm--I'm excited to be here to be able to share the FY22, um, the Cambridge Public Schools adopted budget.

Um, it is a budget that you'll see, um, really centers on the objective around recovery and thriving for our young people and--and, um, does both, builds on, um, investments over the last several years, as well as looks forward and how we can lay the foundation for really important years, um, ahead as we think about the, um, success of our--of our youth.

And, um, excited to be able to--to share elements that, um, we've identified as--as priorities and--and key initiatives related to the budget.

So, our chief financial officer, Claire Spinner, will be sharing her screen to be able to, um, share the slides and we'll be, um, going through them and then I'll--I'll--we'll have time for, um--ample time for questions and discussion.

So, tonight, um, we'll be, um, talking a little bit just a brief review of, um, enrollment and the trends we see somewhere around student demographics before going specifically into the overall picture of it around the FY22 budget, as well as, um, the priorities within that budget proposal.

Um, let me go to the next couple of slides. So, you



know, as we shared earlier, um, in roundtable discussions, we have in Cambridge seen an upward trajectory of about 2%, 2.5% increase in enrollment over the last, um, actually not going back, this could even go--extend beyond the 15/16 school year to the last ten years.

Um, and what we experience this year, similar to other districts across Massachusetts and across the country, was a decrease, um, in enrollment, where there was about uh, a little over 400 students.

Um, we do project, going into next year that a little over half of that decrease will, um,--will be part of our enrollment in the upcoming school year. And future projections also show that that sort of continued growth.

And as I shared, I think in the last time--in our last meeting we had with the City Council, where we saw the decrease, in particular this year, was that the elementary and the high school level, most--more so in the elementary level, um, similar again to other districts in Massachusetts and across the country, a number of families choosing not to have their students enroll, particularly in -- in kindergarten or junior kindergarten, where they otherwise might have, um, because of concerns related to --

to the pandemic.

Um, on the next slide, you see the breakdown and just comparison, um, from the FY or school year 1920 versus current 2020/21 school year, and the breakdown in terms of the percentage of students who are English learners, students with disabilities, high needs, which is a - a single count of how students are economically disadvantaged English learners or students with disabilities, as well as students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

And, um, you know, one thing to note is with the English learner, um, population, one of the other trends we have seen is both due to the, um, stricter and may ways harsher immigration policies of the previous presidential administration, as well as, um, the COVID travel restrictions, um, that resulted in fewer college students and graduate students who might otherwise, um, be enrolling their children in Cambridge public schools, um, is one of the things that we see explaining some of that--some of that demographic trend, particularly around English learners.

Um, the next slide, we're going to jump into the FY22 budget, so at the--at the highest level, it is a budget

that, um, is over 223 million.

It is a budget that is an increase of 4.7% as compared with the FY21 budget, um, and it accomplishes, um, the needs that we have, um, that are related to, and doing everything we're doing today, um, going into next year because of salary and benefit costs and other related increase in expenses, as well as enrollment based needs, um, that exist across our--our schools that are not just based on the numbers of students, but also the profile and programs of students.

So, um, in this case, going into next year, we're continuing to expand an autism spectrum disorder program at the Tobin Montessori School, as well as the Office of Student Services Post-grad Program for students that are 18 to 22, um, and--and currently--and continue to be enrolled in CTS.

And then finally, of course, contract increases relate to other, um, transportation operational needs. Um, but it also is an increase that allows us to, um,--to build on multi-year investments, the budget priorities that we have, as well as this overarching focus around recovery and thrive, which you'll hear me note a few times.

The next slide summarizes the funding sources related to these, um,--to our overall budget. Um, as is the case every year, it's a combination of commercial, um, and residential property tax and state aid, it's called Chapter 70, as well as other state aid and other revenue.

And so, the General Fund Budget is comprised of these areas, and the increase you see is--is from the property tax levy, along with the vast majority of our public schools' budgets.

What is your need going into the next several years? Is that, um, as Committee--as Councillors and Committee Members know, there are some significant federal funds that are also being allocated to districts as part of the federal allocations around stimulus, and these are called the ESSER Funds, or the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds.

And they're actually three different allocations that have been, um, earmarked for Cambridge public schools. This is in addition to ESSER funds that are going directly to the state, as well as other funds that also go to municipalities.

And these are allocations to support a multi-year

work. And so, there will be a multi-year planning and the spending cycles.

As you can see the expenditure deadlines are a span over the next several years, and CPS is projected to--to be allocated about 12 and a half million in ESSER funds that can be used to support, um, many of the recovery and so we're talking about today, as well as, um, mitigation related to COVID-19.

So, going into the, um, overall budget framework and then subsequently the priorities, when the School Committee, um, launched this process with the leadership of our budget Co-Chairs, we identified this overarching, um, objective around what you see in the in the sort of yellow box in the middle of the slide, that all students recover and thrive.

And with that, we know it's not just the academic, um, but also the social and emotional mental health needs that, um, students have in the aftermath of this, um, really difficult year and a half.

And that with that, we need to make sure that we're providing students with, um, individualized, multi-tiered support so that we can accelerate recovery, and progress

and success.

And what you'll may recognize is on the bottom of this slide are these five strategic objectives that have been part of our district plan for the last several years that continue to inform how we think about multi-year objectives.

But these objectives that are listed, they're Objective 1, 2 and 3, really sort of collectively identify how we were thinking about investments and what is needed to support our students and families and educators over the next, um, several years, and--and the FY22 budget around, what are the strategies to help students, um, recover and thrive? How can we look at also long-term capacity for individualized tiered support for students, as well as the ongoing support for school-based efforts and district-based efforts around infection control?

And also addressing, um, what are still some unknowns are going into the upcoming year related to COVID-19 mitigation.

So, double clicking on that first objective of the implementing high impact strategies to help students recover and thrive after the pandemic, we, um, think about

a range of different outcomes.

So, we're really looking to orient how we think about our investments and our strategies and how we're measuring progress related to that.

And so, this is in some ways an expanded list from the current outcomes that we have as part of the district plan, but we're thinking about, you know, um, in the top box there in the in the green, you know, are students are on track to meet their academic goals?

So, we're thinking about performance and growth and literacy in math, course grades completion, as well as FAFSA completion, which is the, um, form that students need to complete in order to be eligible for financial aid in post-secondary education.

Are students building the competencies around social emotional learning for their academic and personal success? So, we look at measures like chronic absenteeism, um, how students are demonstrating SCL competencies and looking at the data related to dysregulated behavior.

And we think also about relationships and--and the supports that students need to help them to thrive.

And looking at positive relationships with adults, u,

school climate, as well as connection with positive extracurricular and out-of-school time opportunities as well. So, those are the outcomes that we're hoping to achieve.

On the left are the strategies that we're--that we're utilizing, using data and new tools to understand what are those individual needs that students have academically and social, emotional and mental health needs as well.

Um, what are the, um, strategies we need around-- around addressing the academic, social, emotional, mental, behavioral health needs of students. And then also thinking about our educators and staff and the capacity to build the professional capacity so that differentiation can take place to meet the needs of students.

And so, you'll hear me describe some of the--some of the examples of tools, some of the strategies we're utilizing and some of the focus that we're also using as we think about professional learning and--and potential capacity building.

Um, this--this slide summarizes of the priorities, um, that you see listed on the left and the specific initiatives that I'll be briefly talking through as we



think about, you know, how do we support our students, um, how do we prioritize equity, inclusion, belonging, how are we looking at expanding postsecondary pathways, supporting teaching and learning through effec--instructional technology, and also strengthening communication information and workflow.

Another, um, you know, another, um, thread and theme that we - we--we utilized as we thought about this budget was, what are we also learned in this challenging year that we want to look at continuing?

Because as challenging year as it was, there was also opportunities for innovation, for looking at ways we can, um, engage students and new and creative ways, and--and there are some things that we want to hold on to in these regards.

Um, So the first one on the next slide, so thinking about the, um, individualized tiered academic and mental behavioral support for students.

So, the, um, some of the budget priorities related to this include a--a recovery team or just part of the Office of Student Services. Um, with the pandemic and the closure of--of schools last spring, that really created, um, a real

a real challenge across the country in terms of the needs of our students with disabilities.

Um, in particular the needs around evaluations and reevaluations. And so, um, we have put together actually this year and this budget proposal is looking at how we can continue the, um, support so that there can be this this multicourse or cross-functional team to be able to address the needs of students and families around evaluations and reevaluations and to have flexible hours, um, with these roles so that they cannot just be during the school day, but also expanded hours to meet those needs.

Um, this area also includes investments around additional paraprofessionals to support--support both before and after-school transitions, particularly at the elementary schools where we've seen, you know, as we've instituted health protocols that are new, that having that--that transition into the building and as well as going home or to after school is really important.

Um, elementary social workers, this is an area that I know city counselors know well that we have over multiple years now expanded the number of social workers at our schools.

Um, this in many ways sort of completes the, um, this-  
-this important phase of having a full-time social worker  
at each of our elementary schools to complement the other  
counselors and social workers at the secondary level as  
well.

Um, intervention. So, we, in our previous budget, had  
invested in part-time math interventionists across all of  
our schools. And so, this budget increases that to a full-  
time in math interventions at all schools, as well as  
literacy, intervention support across all of our upper  
schools.

Um, also, a important new assessment tool, um, called  
i-Ready that gives more, um, functionality around progress  
monitoring of students so that we can more effectively, um,  
dipstick and measure progress over the course of the year,  
as well as have functionality around reporting to families,  
um, the progress of students learning against standards-  
based assessments.

The next slide speaks to the priority of equity  
inclusion and belonging. I talked last year with the City  
Council about the establishment of this Office of Equity  
Inclusion and belonging.

I'm pleased to share that I have appointed Manuel Fernandez, who is currently the head of school at Cambridge Upper School as the interim chief Equity Officer who will be starting in this position in--in July.

And we worked with Manuel, um, this spring in identifying, um, opportunities, particularly based on what we were learning this past year for additional support, in particular around a curriculum and training specialist, um, where we are looking at how we can bring both the sort of evaluation of curriculum to--to increase its cultural responsiveness and reflection of the diversity of our--of our students and families in the curriculum, as well as, um, training for staff.

A lot of the training up to this point in Cambridge public schools and in many places has been, um, leveraging outside consultants and other organizations.

We really think we're at the tipping point, where having that that support and that capacity in-house to be able to support schools and leaders is--is really exciting.

There are also additional funds to support family programming, including Caregiver University, work around restorative practices, support for LGBTQ+ students and

families, um, the Equity Fellows Collaborative, engagement of families of color, as well as the Community Engagement Team.

Um, also, under this, we've expanded, um, the number of hours for family liaisons that are 621 schools, so continuing to build on the, um, expansion of both the number of liaisons as well as the--the time that liaisons are, um, engaging in their important work in our schools.

Um, the next area is around expanding access to postsecondary pathways and the early college expansion. I want to note, um, Mayor Siddiqui and her office's important work, along with Member Fantini, who has been a long time champion of the early college initiative, to be able to help us to lay down some of the groundwork on expanding, um, and building on the dual enrollment opportunities we've had with [inaudible 00:33:33] Community College.

So, looking at how we can partner with an institution of higher education to expand access, again, thinking about the students who historically have, um, not, um, persisted and succeeded in post-secondary education and really looking at how exposure and engagement to participation at the high school--um, during the high school years, um, can

really launch students forward with--with college credits as well as experience to be able to be, um, successful. We also have received a state planning grant as part of--um, to support this work as well.

Effective teaching and Learning through instructional Technology. There certainly has been an enormously, um, a steep--a learning curve that we have--we have moved up over the course of the last year, beginning with emergency remote learning last spring, and, um, just tremendous work and innovation by our--our educators, our--our building principals to be able to utilize, um, instructional technology that really can assess students learning and engagement in new and creative ways.

And this is an example of where, you know, there are things that we've learned over the course of the past year that we want to continue, and that there are some--some really innovative, exciting tools that we've gathered educator feedback on, um, and their interest in continuing this technology for in-person instruction that are also part of this budget.

As we also expand on technology and build on the more enormous work around having a 1:1 Chromebook initiative

across the district, part of the that expansion is also supporting the core technology around, um, Google-G Suite for education, um, the single sign on solution that's utilized in our--in our school system as well as, um, the infrastructure support, um, to support the increased number of Chromebooks.

And then there's this last area around strengthening communications information workflow. Um, this year, more than probably any other year, had shone a light on the importance around communication, around--we really are in partnership with the School Committee expanded and--and increased the regularity of communication with families on having different tools to be able to--to have families be able to select their preferences for their mode of learning as we expanded more opportunities for in-person learning while providing still the opportunity for remote learning for our families, m, and so, expansion of the communications team around both internal as well as external communications to really ramping up our family-family communications.

Building on the work that's happening citywide around translations and--and supporting, um, engagement with our

families.

And then, also related to even the budget process itself, that the budget, um, software that we're planning to invest in, um, will include interactive web-based tools that will enable us to engage, um, community members in new and creative ways as we look to build on another strength as Vice-Chair Bowman spoke of.

In terms of being able to engage members of our community through virtual participation over the course of this past year and seeing how we can build on that.

Um, the next slide, um, summarizes, um, just other kind of key points around our multi-year district plan investments.

So, now while we're talking about these specific investments for FY22, I want to remind the--the -- the Council that this is--this is building on important areas around our five strategic objectives.

Um, and you've heard us, um, talk about the work around level up around 1:1 technology around the building the Equity Bridges Project.

Um, each of those, you know, has a through line to, um, the work that we're doing today and planning moving



forward.

The work around family liaison and expansion of that work, um, with the development of the Office of Equity Inclusion and Belonging, the leadership of Robin Harris as our Director of Family Engagement and the creation of a family engagement specialist with David Bania setting that role.

So, a lot of, um, just important through lines into the investments we've talked about here tonight. And then with engaging learning, the work around interventionists, the language-based learning disabilities program, of course, the support around the whole child.

We've talked previously around, um, high school programming, as well as support that is happening across our elementary schools.

And finally, the important objective around improvements and how we are looking always at how we can, um, think about, um, providing support for--um, at the school level for those schools that need more support, as well as looking at how we're reviewing, um, the programs. And we talked about the risk to program review that is underway as we're looking at next steps moving forward for

students' exploration around career and access, as well as the, um, expansion around risk assessment valuation.

So, you know, I would be, um, remiss if I didn't take a moment to reflect on--on the important work over the last year and a half, where we--we've been through, um, certainly a roller coaster with--with lots of ups and downs, um, with a path that had--that had not been charted before, um, with solutions that, um, were going to be imperfect.

And through it all, as -- as--as Member Fantini said, to really tried to center the children that we serve and the families that we serve.

And I'm just, um, so grateful for the educators and the administrators, the leaders, the families, um, the elected officials that have been so supportive throughout this process.

And ultimately, the students and young people and children in our school district who persisted, um, through this challenging year and I know have--have learned a tremendous amount and have shown their resilience, um, and ability to--to adapt in a way that, you know, I think, you know, um, reinforced and underscored what we know is--is

the strength of our--of our--of our children and--and how important they are to everything that we do every day.

Um, on the next slide, we, um, in particular just want to underscore again the--just how important the support of the city manager and the city council and the School Committee has been to really being, um, I think, a best in class approach around our pandemic response, particularly as it relates to health and safety.

Um, it was the School Committee that really helped us to, um, focus and prioritize COVID-19 testing as a--as a central pillar to how we, um, met the needs of--of our students and staff and families around reopening of school.

Um, it was a partnership with, um, the Cambridge Public Health Department to being able to have real strong practices around quarantine and--and--and--and a health and safety working group that included experts who were who, um, who are parents in our district, who helped us really-- I mean, we had some international experts that were, um, Cambridge community members who helped us to identify what, um, were the things we need to do around PPE, around ventilation, around protocols, around infection control teams, distancing in tents, of all these things that have

been so, so instrumental to being able to enable us to--um, to get to expansion of in-person learning and looking forward to--um, to really making sure that we can, um, build on, um, what we've accomplished this year into the upcoming year ahead.

And just to--to also underscore just the, you know, number of pivots that we've had and the number of turns over the course of the year, where we shifted from emergency distance learning to where we started, actually, the year, remote for all students, um, until opening for students who we saw were the most vulnerable and have the greatest needs and for whom remote learning was going to be the most difficult, um, our students with disabilities, the students in English--um, the Shelter and English Emergent Programs, as well as our youngest learners.

And, um, we were one of the very few districts, um, nationally that actually had four days a week of--of learning for preschool to grade three, um, in the fall of 2020.

We had a shift. We use our metrics where we did, um, a shift all remote for a period of time before reopening, um, and we evolved with the science, and with the--the

expertise that was provided by our public health partners, by the research and science and medical experts, um, that we had access to, to be able to resume in-person learning, to expand on March 1st and then to fully expand for five days of full day learning on April 5th for elementary, April 28th for upper schools and May 10th for the high school.

And again, so, you know, just families and--and students and educators and staff that have been part of this journey to pivot so many times, um, reflected just the -- the innovation and the commitment to the success of our young people.

And, uh, finally, looking ahead, um, you know, we do see this--this budget as an opportunity to, um, really lay the foundation for an important several years moving forward and building on the years, um, the previous years and--and--and--and the work we've done around the district plan.

Um, as you know, this is my fifth and final general fund budget that I'm presenting, um, to the City Council this evening as there will be a leadership transition in the Super Tennessee.

And, um, look forward to working with--with Dr. Greer on ensuring a smooth transition and laying down, um, the foundation for continued success, and--and to build on what Councillor Simmons said at the beginning, really think about how--how we can have a strength-base and asset-base lens as we're thinking about, um, these--these, um, smiling faces beneath the masks, um, that we know are the reason we come to--to work every day.

Um, so thank you, Councillor Carlone and Councillor Simmons, and we'll turn it back over to you for questions and discussion.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Dr. Salim. Um, so we're going to begin with questions from the Council, and we'll have each Councillor, um, initially give two questions and we'll go around. And then, um, some Councillors have submitted more than two and you will get a second round at that. The first Councillor is Councillor Nolan. You have the floor.

And I also want to welcome all the School Committee Members. Um, you've had quite a year and we thank you for everything you've done, we greatly appreciate it. And the staff. And, of course, the Council has been great as well.

But, um, Councillor Nolan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. Am I audible?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. I won't take a long time to just say, I know it's been an amazing year. I've been in your states for the city, for the School Committee. Amazing, in not a good way.

It's been amazingly challenging, traumatic, difficult, and you all have had to step up in ways that no one could have imagined.

Um, and, honestly, I think the Council has, too, but I think you all have--have had an even greater challenge, I will say.

So, I completely honor that. And I know you're--you have tried to assert leadership. And I will say it is even more challenging when five of seven members are new. Let's--let's acknowledge that that's--that that's something that takes learning.

All right. I will ask one of my first questions, and I will say that I listened to my own remarks a year ago, and I didn't know whether to be pleased with my passion then or

really sad that I feel like I could say the exact same things today, because the--we face the exact same challenges. And I know you know that.

And what I also want to make sure is that particularly the School Committee, I know you have faced these challenges and it's not for your lack of trying. There has been other reasons whether--I really have always said there's leadership within, um, you know, the entire district that needs to really step up.

Um, the first one I want to come back to is something I have asked a number of times, is, I--there was not a clear sense in the budget for addressing summer learning.

There's--all the mentions--most of the mentions of summer programs are vague on the summer programs themselves or it mentions transportation costs, or it mentions, um, some programs for English language learners based on Title 3, and this is obviously something that not--it is even more critically important this year because we know that the summer learning loss already creates and exacerbates and leads to a huge loss for some students who don't have the advantage of programs. And now with COVID, it's even more so of a--of a challenge.



And if you got my questions, I don't know, did the entire School Committee get my questions or? All right. I sent it to you and our clerk put it online.

But, my question on the budget is what exactly are the plans for a really robust, high quality summer learning? In the heart of what I'm asking about is the fact that once again, when I reviewed the CRLS expectations, I felt like somebody should be fired, honestly, because there are five books, every single ninth to 12th grade, I will get one of these five books, and the reading levels of those five books are the grade levels by different measures of either Lexile or something called ATOS, are grade three, grade three, grade five, grade five and grade seven. And these are for our 9th to 12th graders.

How often have we said and you said and we all say that growth mindset is the central key, the central element of giving the message to our scholars that we truly believe they can achieve? And by putting out that kind of summer reading says to all ninth to 12th graders that the highest level we expect you to read is seven, and for most of you it's going to be five. It just boggles my mind.

And I--I highlight that is, I think, a disconnect in

what we say we want. We walk--talk the talk and we're not walking the walk.

And for me, not seeing anything in the budget, after all, we know about summer learning loss and the anticipation of a COVID flood of challenges, I--I guess I don't understand or I hope I missed it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So, your question is, why?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Well, my question is, actually, what is--what in this budget is--because this budget goes to this summer too, it starts in a month. So, what are we doing for this summer to specifically address what we already know is going to be a challenge. So, that's I mean, that's how--how that summer question ties to the budget, because I didn't see it, either I missed it or it's not there, which--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Dr. Salim or a member of your staff or School Committee.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Thanks for the--for the question. So, um, I'll start off which of some overarching pieces related to summer and summer programming and as it relates to the budget, um, and then I'll ask our

deputy superintendent, Dr. Turk, around, um, to share some--some comments related to, um, summer reading in particular.

So one of the things and this is something that we can certainly think about as we think about the budget book and the presentation moving forward, so this is--this was a presentation specifically around the FY22 budget and where we focused on new investments.

In the case of summer, um, there are two things, one is, um, they're not necessarily new general fund dollars that are from that additional allocation, um, but existing funds Title 1 dollars as well as ESSER funds, um, that are coming from federal government.

So, we refocus a lot of existing Title 1 dollars as well as summer funding to, actually, do a lot of work that we started last year, building on some of the work we did a couple of years ago and having a literacy focused summer program that comes from knowing you're a member, you are part of helping us to think through, um, that was both a combination of an academic as well as an enrichment of experience.

And so, that we're actually expanding this summer to

five different sites across our elementary schools, um, where there'll be in-person opportunities, as well as, um, remote summer learning opportunities.

Because our--our--our perspective on the summer are both out of this sort of the need to make decisions around the planning, as well as, um, how we're just actually getting it--having--getting also guidance from--from Deci, is that, you know, through this summer, we know that they're going to still be, um, some--some students and some families who may need that remote option.

And in fact, the remote option, which isn't the primary purpose, obviously, of this summer school year, but does allow students that may be, um, traveling out of the city or out of state to actually still participate in some of that academic work.

And so, we're actually building on some of the work for the remote program, what we did last year, which was to actually have teachers working with smaller groups of students, um, specifically around literacy and actually saw some, um, some--um, some positive, um, results from that work.

So, building on that, as well as building on what

happened on the couple of years ago program of having the, um, School Department and DHS be partnership so that there is an academic component, as well as the HSP program, so that there is that sort of full day need that many families have over the course of summer.

Um, because we've heard from for many families that, you know, historically the half day title one or half day, um, sometimes academic programs, um, that families just couldn't--couldn't actually, um, participate in, um, because of the need around--around, you know, their--their own workdays.

Um, so we will be focusing, um, this summer programming specifically to have students who have the greatest need academically.

They'll be transportation, um, they'll be food, and--and--and strong collaboration with DHS to be able to launch this.

We're actually going to be presenting with the DHSP, as well as the Agenda For Children on--at the next School Committee meeting, um, to--to talk more, um, specifically around that planning about that programming.

Um, so--so those are just some of the ways in which

we're using. How it relates to budgeting and funding as it relates to summer programming.

Um, on the summer reading piece, I'm going to ask our deputy superintendent, Dr. Turk, to speak a little bit about that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Welcome, Dr. Turk.

**DR. CAROLYN TURK:** Good evening, Councillor Carlone. Always a pleasure. So, through you, Councillor Carlone, hopefully I will be able to, uh, respond and--and do this question justice.

Um, I do want to take a moment just to, uh, clarify that the, uh, reading list that Councillor Nolan mentioned as part of her question is actually not a required reading list.

It is a selection of books that were part of a, um, sort of student giveaway, both for the summer of 2020 and then again during the summer of 2021, um, but they are not the--um, the reading list or required reading list for the students.

One of the things that the high school, uh, educators with their school librarians have made a conscious decision to do is to have an approach that, um, builds on the theme

of, um, building community through reading.

And so, with those books that are part of the list of five, um, there is a request that students, uh, choose one of the one of those books at some point during the summer, um, so that when they return in the fall, there are sort of these mini book groups that come together, and as a community, they talk about what they have read or what they have shared, um, or share what they have read during those conversations.

But the requirement for the reading is really, um, books of students choices throughout the summer, and the Deans, as well as the library staff, work with students [coughing] prior to the end of the school year to direct them to books that would be, um, can be found either through the school library or the onsite library, the public library, uh, or there are two, um, electronic access points for students to be able to have access to books, as well as books that they may decide to purchase throughout the summer. Um, and they--the staff knows that those books will also range in terms of, uh, interest and--and rigor.

Something else that I just want to mention is that with the Lexiles, um, Lexile that were measured that were

mentioned, that the Lexiles in--in any discussion that one might have about use as a measurement, Lexiles typically measure a word difficulty.

And it is really just one part of what is considered when educators are looking at, um, a selection of books for students. And it's really very much a quantitative measure.

The other piece that is always taken into consideration is [inaudible 00:57:56] grade level is much more qualitative, and it has to do with content, um, or themes or maturity level.

And I mention that because, um, it's not just looking at a Lexile level that would say--and I will say that, yes, Lexile levels do have a corresponding grade level, but looking at just--at those in isolation does not give a whole story or a whole picture.

So, for example, you might have a book like *Of Mice and Men* or *The Grapes of Wrath*. Both of those books actually have relatively low Lexile levels, but they are-- they would never be recommended for our youngest students because of the complexity of the material that is associated with them.

So, there are several pieces of the--sort of the



puzzle that are put together in terms of selection of books.

So, I would agree that, yes, there is a range of the books that were listed as part of the book giveaway, and there is a range from probably what would be considered a 4th grade level to a 12th grade level, um, but they are also--there is also differentiation in terms of the complexity, and I would--I would hesitate to just look at that information only in terms of Lexile, only in terms of, um a grade level.

And again, that is not a--a required reading list, it is something that students may choose from for the community part of the requirement, but it is not the required reading list.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Councillor, did you wish to further comment?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah. Thank you and I appreciate that. And I know, Dr. Turk, you and I have talked about this a lot in the past as well as long as Dr. Salim.

I know there's a complexity of content that that's different, and yet for us to have a list, my understanding

is these are still books, they will be one given to every student, and none of them are at a grade level of level of complexity.

Again, it's all about walking the talk of growth mindset and of sending the message to scholars that we truly believe they can achieve higher.

So again, this is in the context of all of the summer because it's a critically important time for us to consider.

And--and I appreciate your working on it, I - I still believe if that's not the only measure to use, fine, then let's make sure that's one of the measures we use and then there's some other measures as well.

This can be a both end, that we--we expect much, much higher level grade level. I mean, we expect at least a 9th through 12th grade level, especially if 12th graders are being asked to read a graphic novel that's not at a 3rd grade reading level. It's not sending the right message.

Um, and I appreciate all that, um, I appreciate that the summer programs were not listed out in the book, I--I do hope that there's actually outcome measures attached to it, because in all of what Dr. Salim you mentioned, I--in

the KIP Summit and others, I haven't ever heard an articulation of what the expected outcomes are, which I think should be in a--a future budget.

Um, I can move on. My second question also relates to outcomes. There's, I realize you couldn't perhaps update some of the outcomes, and yet, as we talked about last year and as we've talked about for years, for literally 15 years, we have had a goal of having all of our 3rd graders read at grade level.

This has been an explicit target, but we haven't had the accountability to match to it. And it's very similar with 8th grade, um, algebra started in 1992, was the first time I ever found it requesting a plan, the School Committee, to implement a full year of algebra, um, probably following the 1990 Commendation for the Algebra Project at the King's School.

So, the question is, in this budget, there's many outcome measures tied to various programs--or there's many aspirational things, but are we explicitly stating that within two years, so current first graders, will reach literacy, all of them? No distinction between color, flavor, background. Reading at grade level within two

years.

And will all 8th graders, without distinction, be at grade level? Or for me it would be passing successfully completing algebra. But either one of those measures within a couple of years, which has been a long-standing measure of the district.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Doctor.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yes, thank you, um, for that for the question.

So, you know, it's a goal of every, um, educator and administrator and, you know, in every classroom and school to, um, have students, um, succeed.

You know, that is, um, the work that happens at an individual level. And, you know, we certainly look at, um, how we can really try to meet students on--on where--on what their specific needs are, and the focus around thinking about, um, individualizing support for students, um, is--is related to how we, um, use supports like interventionists, um, coaches and others, um, to be able to identify, um, student need and also to then, um, provide appropriate intervention.

I briefly mentioned in the presentation of the, um, i-

Ready assessment tool, which is something that, um, we've had some discussions around for--for the--for--for particularly actually, I would say in this last year, um, because of the importance of having screeners and having that--um, that information on a regular basis, of how students are--are doing.

We did use our, what our current tool is, the fast forward screeners, um, this--this this year, but there aren't as robust progress monitoring tools, um, as exist with the--with i-Ready platform.

And so that's a--um, that's--so we are using screeners, both to identify, um, students that have the academic needs, and then also then connecting to your first question, um, then identifying those students for, um, the summer programming to be able to leverage that time, um, as well.

This year, another important effort, in addition to the small group instruction I talked about as part of not just last year, but actually that continued through the year with remote learning, um, in our schools, in many cases where, um, schools actually organize schedules so that teachers were able to work with small groups of

students and actually see a lot of--of progress and growth.

Um, in addition, at a district wide level, have done a lot of work around the screeners related to reading difficulty, including, um, elements of dyslexia, and so have actually district-wide a training for our early childhood educators or JKK, um, educators around new assessments and how to use those assessments, and then what are the appropriate interventions to support our students?

Because we know that, you know, reading by a third grade doesn't just happen in third grade, it doesn't just happen in second or first, but it's we're--we're building on the literacy skills from students as soon as they--they come to us.

And I know that, you know, the Council has talked also, um, at length around how we can also, you know, continue to move forward towards our effort to also have expanded opportunities around early childhood education.

Um, so those are some of the--some of the pieces around, um, specific strategies around reading instruction and literacy instruction.

Um, with regard to the sort of the - the eighth grade math, I know, um, you're aware we've described and--and

just sort of how algebraic concepts actually are really spiral through the, um, existing curriculum frameworks over--over the--the course of a year.

But, you know, increasingly what we've tried to do, particularly at the upper school, um, is really expanding, um, essentially like the what I need blocks, the wind blocks that allow for time around personalized support for, um, students that don't require, you know, pull out from, um, you know, from--from their general--you know, from their--from their math, science, social studies, um, or English classroom or their, you know, their art music, um, PE classes, where, you know, students also are engaging in important, um, learning that may be not, um, solely just sort of that the academic piece.

So, um, so these are all certainly, um, you know, continue to be, um, the priorities that we have. Um, we have, um, you know, I think, unfortunately, the pandemic did delay the important work that the School Committee will be engaging in around the successor district plan, um, and with that, um, identifying, um, not just what--thinking about the seven current outcomes, but whether are there other outcome measures that should be considered as we

think about, um, progress, um, monitoring and improvement for our--for our students.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Doctor. Councillor, did you want to follow?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Those were two most important questions, but it sounds like there is not--what I want to hear back. I don't actually care how we get there, I don't care about any--I just want them to be effective, I want them to be put in place.

I want that outcome to be clearly stated that, yes, within two years we know--we--we know how to do this, between intensive tutoring, individual success plans, reaching out, call kids every day, if that's what it takes, instead of just every week.

So, I appreciate that we're trying, but what I actually want to hear, which sounds like it's not in there, that we are not committing to an across the board 100% for those two goals. Um, thank you. Those are my two most important, Chair Carlone, and I will yield.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Uh, the clerk just reminded me, uh, to state that we have no, uh, public comment submissions, um, so we will move on



from there.

Um, Councillor McGovern is next, followed by Councillor Sabrina Wheeler. Councillor McGovern, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank--[coughing] excuse me, thank you, um, Mr. Chair. Um, thank you all for being here, nice to so you see if even if it is virtual.

Um, before I ask my two questions, I too just want to, um, thank you all for, um, your incredible amount of work, um, this--over the past year and a half or a year or so. And--and I also want to thank--also want to thank our educators and our staff, um, in addition to all of the work that you guys have done and that they have done, um, to sort of reimagine and reconfigure everything, you're also doing that while balancing your own concerns around COVID and all of that. So, just, um, really, I really applaud, um, I really applaud you.

Um, one question I have, I'm very excited to see, um, we are at, uh, at least one social worker in every school. Um, am excited for a couple reasons. One, because I know the value of that and two, because I can now stop badgering you about it every year at the budget, because we're fin--

we're there. So, it's great.

My question is about support for them. Um, I know that, and not just emotional support and sort of [inaudible 01:10:24] support, but we have Alice Cohen, who is--and I forget Alice's title, [inaudible 01:10:31] Alice's been a one woman show for a long time, and maybe I missed it, not seeing anything in the budget to [inaudible 01:10:40] or to any kind of assistance that she might be getting.

And then again, maybe I missed it, but I know, she does a tremendous amount of work supporting all of the hospitals and social workers in the district, and I'm just wondering if she needs more support.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor, I think we-

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**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** She has not asked me to ask that question.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor, I think we got that entire question, but just know your bandwidth is low and later on in your second --

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** You don't hear me?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** we can hear you, but it--it felt like you might not be able to complete the

sentence, but we got it all.

Um, what I'm saying is that you might just check your connections during the answer.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** I've already--I've already had to log off and come back in, so I've already done that once today, so I'm having some issues. But, again, the question is just about support for our social workers and for Ms. Cohen.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Great.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Councillor McGovern, just through you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Councillor McGovern, you might want to turn off your video, they may improve the, um, quality of your audio.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay, but we did get the question. Dr. Salim.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yes. Um, so thank you for--for the question.

So, um, starting off, we certainly are also excited to

be able to, um, have this, um, what has been the--um, I think a theme through a number of areas of a multiyear, um, expansion, in this case with the general education social workers.

Um, this is, as I think, you know, certainly many counselors know in addition to a school-based adjustment counselor all of our elementaries and school psychologist. And some of those are while their caseload may be supporting predominantly students, um, with individualized education plans, are also part of the supports that are-- that are at the schools.

Um, so you are correct, Councillor McGovern, that Alice Cohen, who is our lead teacher for social emotional learning, is a key, um, leader on the team who convenes, um, the social workers across the district.

Um, however, over the course of the last several years, we also have made other investments and expansion around, um, this, um, this area, including, um, a role filled by Ayesha Hurry, which is a district wide social workers.

We've also, um, in particular this year and looking at how we can focus our work around social-emotional learning

and mental behavioral health areas that, um, certainly have been a--a significant focus for the School Committee, um, looking at how we can have stronger, um, alignment and integration across departments.

And so, we've actually had a team, really, a kind of an ACL team that's not just Alice and Ayesha, but also, um, Jim Carthy, who oversees, um, health. Jenny Flynn, also who--who's involved in wellness.

So, there's a whole--whole team around supporting student wellness, as--as well as, um, Robin Harris and her always with family engagement of supporting that work, along with our Research Assessment Evaluation Director, Jenn Amigone and the entire teaching and learning team, um, that is part of that, um, support with, um, Dr. Turk and Dr. Pinkus Brown, Dr. Gordon, Dr. Madera and Dr. Morgan as--as key pieces.

Um, we also are--just take this opportunity to highlight that we are part of a statewide, um, academy that's focused on social-emotional learning and mental behavioral health as part of a three-year, um, engagement that also includes, um, technical assistance from EDC that also provides some external support for--for our work.

Um, when we're thinking about the upcoming year and the work that social workers as well as school teams will be doing, um, it's--it will be centered not just around the direct student supports, but also how do we continue to build the capacity of our, um, classroom teachers to support, um, SCL competency.

So, a lot of that work around relationship building, engagement, connection, uh, family engagement, um, and that, um, you know, are part of things like the morning advisories, those tier one experiences that we know are really important as a foundation, um, as well as an analysis of students for teams and--and coordinating the health teams, um, across our schools as well.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you. Through you, Mr. Chair, just a quick follow-up, because I think, you know, the mental health and emotional support is going to be so much more important.

Um, we used to--and I didn't--we used to have some--we used to fund some slots at the guidance center for our students because the waiting lists for outside therapy and support are just--are just incredibly long. Are we still doing that and is there any thought to expand that, if

that's at all possible?

Because I think the--we're going to see, once kids come back and we actually have real eyes on them in 3D, we're going to really start to identify more and more kids who need support.

So, do--are we still doing that? Do we still have money for that program? And have you thought about, I don't know what their capacity is, but expanding it, maybe even with other therapeutic organizations?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yeah. I am not sure about the existing--I know that the guidance center has been a resource along with Riverside, um, and have been longstanding partners with the district. I don't know specifically around the--the specific services, um, we can certainly follow-up.

But I think, you know, one of the things that we hope to do is to be able to, um, certainly have our--our school-based staff be able to be important resources.

And then certainly, you know, through some of our partnerships, see where we're complementary, um, opportunities may exist as well.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** And finally, um, and if

I missed this again, I apologize.

Um, you know, for a number of years now, we have been contracting with the Community Engagement Team, which is, I think, had some incredible results. We saw huge upticks in--in participation from caregivers and families that typically didn't, for various reasons, participate in teacher conferences and events and things like that.

Um, are we still doing that? And is there a thought of expanding that as we sort of come back and people start to reengage? Um, I just didn't--I didn't see it in there, but again, I could have missed it.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yeah. So, thanks for raising that. So, actually, yeah, we absolutely, you know, value tremendously the communication and partnership that we--we have. And because of its success, there actually is an increase in the CET partnership budget. Building on a--on an increase from a couple of years ago as well.

Um, so, you know, this is part of, um, also our expansion of, um, the Family Engagement Team to have a dedicated director, um, with Robin Harris as well as a family engagement specialist, um, as--and also an Amharic-speaking liaison as well, um, along with the investments



related to translations capacity across the district, too.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Great. Thank you. Those are my questions for this round. If I don't get to come back, Dr. Salim, thank you for your service, and as you go on to the next chapter of your--of your life, the best of luck to you. And I appreciate your work.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. The next Councillor is Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, and thanks for convening this meeting. And thank you to our colleagues on the School Committee for all the work they've put into this budget.

Um, my question, um, first question there to Dr. Salim, was that, a topic you covered a little in your initial presentation, and that was learning from the pandemic and seeing what we can do going forward and [inaudible 01:18:53] that was impressive with the school system's response and their abilities and then how quickly we got remote technology out to students, the Wi-Fi hotspots, the thumb drives to students.

And we know that, um, students, even before the

pandemic, didn't have technol--technological access, didn't have access to broadband.

Um, in addition to sort of the--overview you gave about, you know, ensuring remote technology, um, can you talk a little bit more specifically how that's going to be managed coming out of the school year, going into next school year and maintaining access for students who will be back in school, but, you know, may still need Internet access or struggle with that to do homework, to do research on their own, to really, you know, engage in the way that 21st-century education demands.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yes. Thank you for--for--for the question. So, you know, last year saw, um, the opportunity for us to expand what had been a 1:1 initiative for grade, um, 3 to 12, um, and actually then expand to the entire district, you know, preschool to grade, um, 12.

And so that--that expansion of that, um, you know, take home 1:1 initiative was something that was--that was done, of course, for remote learning going into next year.

That 1:1 initiative that had actually just been for the high school for take home is now going to be also for the upper schools. And, you know, we certainly anticipate

that many of those--many students will--will be able to continue using some of the important technology tools, the sort of personalized adaptive platforms that, um, that exist.

And also, um, some exciting, I think, some of the exciting products that students have generated that are around content creation, um, that have been really important, um, as part of the learning over the course of the past year.

So, that is going to be continuing. I know that Mayor Siddiqui and her office, um, along with folks from the city departments, have been meeting with Steve Smith, our chief information officer on the Internet Essentials Program, what are some of the challenges of it? What are some ways we might find ways of--of--of improving?

We currently do have a survey out to--out to eligible families to find out why they might not have enrolled, um, for the Internet Essentials Program, so to try to get a better understanding of what other, um, obstacles or barriers that might exist as we're assessing what the--what the needs might be.

We do have something called the Tech Goes Home Program

that, um, a number of our liaisons that are involved in as well that also, um, do support, um, the needs of our--of our families, where families that participate also get a--a laptop for their -- um, for their home use.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Okay. Thank you. And my second question was on universal pre-K. And we had a response from--staff on that at our City Council meeting on Monday, and we actually placed that on the table so that we can have a Joint Council School Committee meeting on it at some point, um, like it happened in December 2019.

Um, but one of the pieces that, um, came up that I wanted to ask about is space for pre-K, which always comes up as sort of one of the steps we really need to be thinking about, to think about a universal pre-K program.

And I know that, um, new spaces will be coming on - online, like the just to start, um, new building that will be there, but, you know, in terms of the spaces that are at our school buildings, which is, you know, a prime target, when we think about, you know, spaces for universal pre-K, uh, how does this budget grapple with that? Um, or if the planning for it even past this year's budget, can you talk about how are you thinking about pre-K spaces?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yeah. So--so thanks for the question. I mean, Space, um is certainly the--the--one of the--um, the key considerations and challenges and actually one of the -- the reasons why, you know, the current junior kindergarten program is structured the way it is, um, and why it's eligible for just half of the cohort of students, is because, um, of the--the space needs that are--that are needed for those programs.

Um, so the new Tobin Building Project, um, does include, as you --- you probably know, additional DHSP programs.

And really, I think, you know, part of the reason for the recommendation around the mixed delivery model is looking at how, um, private programs can also be leveraged as part of the--the constellation of - of - of--of--supports and - and--and avenues to early childhood, high quality early childhood education that our families can engage in.

Um, we're going to be, you know, continuing to work closely with the City, um, on that launch, um, as--as I know that you are very well aware, um, you know, this past year saw many of our, um, early childhood programs really,

um, scramble and try to figure out, you know, with--with new COVID restrictions what could and could not be accomplished.

And so, you know, look forward to working with DHSP and [inaudible 01:24:43] through partnership and the many community partners and providers, um, around moving that important work forward.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor, do you want to follow up with that?

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** No, that's great. Thank you all. I yield back for now.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. So, um, it looks like we're back at Councillor Nolan, second round. Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. I thought Councillor Simmons had also sent in some questions. And I see the Vice Mayor's hand up. I'm happy to yield to them before I go to my second round.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Simmons is presently at another meeting.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** All right.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** And will return.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. I believe that - I'm happy to yield to the Vice Mayor since she has not had a chance yet, and then I can ask other questions. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Her hand--oh, her hand just came up. Yes, Vice Mayor, you have the floor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for recognizing me. Um, and welcome to Dr. Salim, your team, our esteemed members of the School Committee. Thank you for all of your work this year.

I know it has been said many times in this meeting, uh, already, but I think it's--it's worth saying again that your persistence, your perseverance, the--the care and concern that you showed for our families, for our students, for our teachers and our staff during a very difficult time where there was no good options, um, you know, it was this bad option versus this other bad option, um, I think you all threaded that needle very, very well.

And I, for one, am grateful for all of the work that you put in. I'm not sure that any of you have slept in the past 15 months.

I also just want to take a moment to thank our

teaching staff. Um, they're not here tonight, but I know that they have put in a tremendous amount of work over the last 15 months caring for our students. And I, for one, am very, very grateful for their work. I hope they get some time off this summer to rest and relax and recharge those batteries.

I did have a couple of questions, um, one, I brought up at a budget hearing, a city side budget hearing, but Mr. Maloney was not actually in attendance, so I was advised to ask him here, it is around our capital budget and our plans for our schools for enhanced ventilation.

I know that over the past year and a half we have placed, um, air scrubbers in a lot of our--most of our classrooms to really recirculate that air and increase air ventilation. How are we thinking about, um--in our capital budget, I don't see anything in our current capital budget to really think about being creative around air ventilation.

This isn't the last pandemic or airborne virus that we're going to have to worry about, and I did see, um, MIT put together a big presentation on--on adding ventilation into some of our older buildings that would, you know,



remove the need for these really loud air scrubbers.

So, I'm curious if, through you, Mr. Chair, to Dr. Salim or to Mr. Maloney, if we could just talk a little bit about our capital plan for increasing ventilation in all of our schools.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Sure, yes. Our Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Maloney, is on. There he is, I'm scrolling through. Go ahead, James.

**JAMES MALONEY:** So, um, thank you for that question. Um, I think that we approach this, um, from day one, um, as recognizing that it's both a short-term and long-term issue.

[coughing] I think--I think the work that we did last summer-- [coughing] excuse me, working with a panel of experts, um, both engineers, epidemiologists, um, pediatricians, public health officials from Harvard, um, as well as BU, um, MIT, Emerson and other schools, um, around the area, we were able to, I think, get a little bit ahead of the curve.

And when you look at the--at our ability to open, um, in October, um, with buildings that in some cases were over 100 years old, um, plants that were 100 years old, speaks

of the kind of support we had from our expert advisors, um, from those who came before us, um, and from City Council School Committees who supported us.

Um, right now we're in the midst of about a \$450,000 balancing, uh, program that will--that will be completed in the next few weeks, and that comes on the heels of the complete analysis that we did last summer to identify just sort of a baseline.

Uh, out of this, um--out of this, uh, balancing project will become the, sort of the short-term work, which will be remediation for all of our buildings. As you know, we have buildings that are only a year and a half old and we have buildings, uh, plants that are over 100 years old.

Um, lots can be done, um, to make those remediations. That will be the goal for the summer work. It could approach a half a million dollars, um, or more this summer for remediation.

And then for longer term, will be--sort of mid-term, we'll be engaging the engineering firm next to work on specific buildings, um, perhaps the Longfellow Building, which has one of our lowest, uh, natural, uh, rates of exchange of air, uh, and perhaps the Cambridgeport.

Um, one of the things we learned in working with pandemic experts who work around the globe, quite frankly, um, creating endemic, resilient buildings was that some of our older buildings, such as the Cambridgeport, um, were built with pandemics in mind.

And in fact, it's interesting to now, and I don't mention this at a School Committee meeting, and I hesitate to say this, um, jinx ourselves, um, but Cambridgeport, which I had on my list as perhaps our most problematic school a year ago [coughing], when the architects who work on pandemic resilient buildings met with us, they said we may be pleasantly surprised.

And while there are many reasons why we have infections and--and--and a pandemic, the fact is the Cambridgeport building has had the fewest infections of any of our buildings, um, which is either luck, um, random, or it has to do with natural ventilation, even though it has, um, a very aged system there.

So, we have a short-term, which is the current \$450,000 study, um, reba--rebalancing project, which has identified deficiencies that will lead to about a half a billion dollars worth of work, um, this summer in the

short-term.

We will then move to a mid-term identifying one or two buildings, and then, uh, we will be identifying, um, a longer term capital.

I can't tell you how--how difficult this project--this work will be, both from--a financial standpoint, which is really not the biggest issue. The biggest issue will be our capacity to do the work in buildings where we occupy.

Um, as we--as you know, our goal right now is, um, vacate the Tobin building, um, and get that project off and running this summer, um, but we're also had some discussions with--preliminary discussions with, um, Mr. Kail and--and the finance team about a longer-term, um, feasibility study for a few more buildings. So, we're pretty confident that we'll continue to address it.

Um, we're looking at such facts--factors as ultraviolet, uh, germicidal lighting, uh, which helps with, um, the viruses in the air, and we're looking at the possibility of those being installed directly into uninvents. So, there's a lot going on.

Um, is it going to happen overnight? No. Can it happen even in two or three years? No. Um, but we're pretty

confident that, um, we are moving ahead.

And, of course, we also have a number of buildings dating back to the '90s that have excellent natural, uh, air exchange rates and we've also learned that fresh air through windows, um, can add at a minimum to exchanges per hour.

So, that even brings into mind the question of where we'll be going with, you know, with the HEPA filters going forward. I don't know if that answers your question, but that's sort of an overview of where we're at, uh, short-term, medium-term and long-term, um, program.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you. Mr. Chair, through you, uh, it does answer my question. I wanted to make sure that we were investing some serious money into, you know, making sure we are ready for the next pandemic, um, or an airborne virus.

It's funny that you should mention the Cambridgeport because, uh, the MIT project revealed that there is a chase in the middle of the building that helps with air exchange, and so, I--you know, it was really interesting that the School Department had sort of engaged them in that process, in that project, because I think it's--it really shows that

we're forward thinking on--on how to really address this issue, um, knowing that some of our buildings are very, very old.

I just wanted to ask a follow up question. You said the Longfellow school had the, um, lowest air exchange rate, the Longfellow School on Broadway?

**JAMES MALONEY:** That's correct.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** So, given that the Tobin School will be moving in there in September, there's obviously some work that needs to be done over the summer. Is that--you're confident that that work will be done over the summer and ready for those schools?

**JAMES MALONEY:** Yeah. I mean, we'll be doing remediation. Will--will it go up without any mitigation to four? No.

But, uh, I want to point out that many of our buildings don't. We had this discussion with the buildings and grounds and with the Tobin parents earlier. Um, the fact of the matter is, uh, many of our buildings, uh, the Tob--the current Tobin is only at a 1.7, they'll be going to a 1.3, so it's not like, um, there's a huge drop there. And I--I would point out that the Tobin is a building that

has had a horrendous history of, um, air quality issues going back almost from the day it opened.

Um, and also, I know there's been some concerns about outdoor space. We feel that the outdoor space that the Longfellow is equal to or greater to places such as the Cambridgeport, um, School of Fletcher made it, when you take out the roof, um, and other schools that are about the same.

So, while there's no--no getting away from the fact that the Tobin has a lot of outdoor space right now, um, the outdoor space that they will have in their temporary quarters, uh, will be equal to or greater than some of our existing schools, [inaudible 01:35:17] students will be fine. As I mentioned, the Cambridgeport, we've gotten to a very tough pandemic year there and had very few cases. Again, that may or may not be the result of outdoor space and--and quality.

I also think it's important that people know that--I mean, I would--I would--I would remind people that we--we opened, and I think a lot of credit goes to the School Committee, to the City Council for its support, um, to our principles, um, to the unions, we opened in October, four

days a week, for our most vulnerable students.

Um, and a lot of that had to do with the work that we did in engineering. In fact, on Friday, we've been asked to present at Dr. Daniel Allen's, uh, National Seminar on Engineering Upgrades, and we'll be pointed out as a school district that got ahead of the curve, um, last summer, through the work of our advisory group, the work of Chair Jose Louis's, um, Buildings and Grounds, uh, the work of -- the other two crew members of that, member Bowman and--and Member Fantini.

So I think--I think we as a city have a whole lot to be proud of in the ventilation work that we were able to get done this year, and a whole lot to--to look forward to in the next few years as we continue to tackle that issue.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. Thank you very much. Um, through you, Mr. Chair, my next question is, uh, about the RISTA assessment that we are currently undertaking, uh, taking a look at our RISTA programs, where, um, programs could be, uh, enhanced [coughing] and what programs are missing. Do we have a timeline for when that will be completed?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yeah. So, um,



unfortunately, this is--this was a program that we did talk about, um, for this year, and because of the fact that, um, we were only able to, um, have in-person a subset of students and a couple of programs for the majority of the year, um, until we had, you know, the expansion on March 1st, um, that it didn't make sense to do, you know, the in-depth review, um, that we had planned for.

And also, um, it's worth noting that a number of just even organizations that typically are involved in doing this kind of work, um, also, um, had put a pause on--on their work and doing these types of--particularly the in-person visits that are really important for doing some of the assessment, particularly around facilities, um, as well as the programming of student.

So, we're currently in the first phase that will, um, include an analysis of the current programs, student outcomes, um, stakeholder surveys, um, not just of current students, but also former students, um, partners.

As--as you know, there are advisory boards for each of the programs, and so getting the input and feedback from those folks, from staff, from families, as well as, uh, from our upper school students as, um, they think about

sort of their interests and what they look forward to, and--and high school in the types of learning.

Um, so that kind of like perception of--of career tech and--and risk is something that will be--that we're currently in the process of--of doing.

Um, some of the subsequent phases that will be, um, launched, um, in the upcoming year will be that facilities review, um, the workforce analysis, um, against program offerings, so seeing just sort of the matches around credentials and, um, the sort of the--the job market analysis, um, that, you know, I think would also be really interesting to see in this dynamic period, also in the aftermath of the pandemic as sectors of our economy have also shifted, um, as well.

Um, they'll also be a landscape analysis of peer programs and regional programs. Um, they'll be a, um--we're also looking at actually having a--a task force that, um, you know, we're tentatively calling sort of the Future Of RISTA Task Force that can also, um, be involved so that it can be a multi-stakeholder, um, group that can be part of that review of the data and analysis, uh, to then lead to, uh, recommendations moving forward.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** So, thank you. Mr. Chair, through you, I guess I didn't really hear a timeline in there. I understand that, you know, it was abbreviated or--or put on hold because of COVID, like everything else. But, what you just described, is that a one-year process is not a two-year process?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** So, it should be a-- it should be a--it'll be--it's a process that has launched now and through, um, the--the - probably, through next year, I don't see it as being--I mean, there could be multi-year aspects, where we want to incorporate just some of the a regular review of the--of the program, but sort of the--the main--um, the main, kind of, body of work that I described is really the aim is to do that in the first semester of--of next year, so that if there are any recommendations that might have budget implications for FY 23, uh, that it could be, um, those recommendations can be made to inform that.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** And then the task force, the Future of RISTA Task Force, that's also happening at the--the first semester part next year?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Oh, yeah, yeah. So

that would be part of launching that in the fall, so that as--as part of--as the data and analysis are coming in as results from surveys, um, kind of like what we did actually with Building Equity Bridges Project, where they were sort of like teams of people that were looking at the data and doing the sense making and then making recommendations.

Um, we're really looking at this as being sort of a--a way of having a multi-stakeholder, um, group being able to give that--that perspective.

And also, um, you know, I made reference in my presentation to the--to the sort of the important work that this Committee will be engaging in around the district plan, um, and so also see, you know, those pieces connecting with one another, which is really, you know, important as we think about multiyear improvement efforts.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. Thank you. And something that came up during our City Council budget was that the Department of Human Services is actually going through a workforce development, um, recommendation and plan for 18+, and something we talked about, uh, at those budget hearings is that, you know, we really need to be working with the School Department to think about that 14

to 18, because that is workforce development and that is a way for us to be working together.

So, hopefully the School Department in that picture of, uh, RISTA Task Force can be really working closely with the Department of Human Services to, um, really be connecting those dots between the 14 and 18 year olds and then the 18+.

Um, because that's really where workforce development, where we think about our most vulnerable. Um, when they graduate, it's often some of those same--same students.

So, I know that Member Wilson, Member Fantini, um, Member Rachel and myself, uh, went out to Minuteman to see their offerings and it was really, really amazing what they had to offer. So, I hope that part of what we're doing is saying, "This is what we can offer here at RISTA," but then also how do we partner with someone like Minuteman where we--we aren't offering some of those services so our kids can have a, you know, world class technical, uh, services, education. So, I look forward to that. Thank you very much. Um, I yield back, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Vice Mayor. Co-Chair Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Um, thank you, Mr. Chair. Uh, just a few questions. First, I was--during the -- in, through the budget, the mention of social workers was-- was mentioned, the additional social workers. Now, as someone has--who's has sat on the School Committee and I remember the conversations that we had around trying to get social workers in the schools, I was very pleased to see that that happened. And now I see these additional social workers that are being added.

But then it makes me bring up this question, uh, will the social workers reflect the student population they serve? What will--what will we do around it? What will the School Department do around cultural competency and language requirements? And what kind of training will there be in order for these social workers to be successful?

And I ask that in the context of your social equity and diversity. There's money in the budget, you talk about professional development, we have the social workers.

I think it's important to have social workers, given what our children have experienced through COVID, not being able to have life as they are accustomed to it. So, social workers are extraordinarily important, and I'm glad to see

that you're addressing it.

My concerns are, uh, I could not make a connection with the additional social workers and cultural--the cultural competency who are going to be in front of our children.

And I ask that because I know at least one parent's concern was that the social worker with the wrong cultural attitude will do more harm than good.

And so, if you could speak a little bit to how you're using those equity training dollars to impact the training and cultural competency around the social workers, and-- because I didn't speak to, it just said more social workers. And I don't know, currently, if the social workers are of one cultural perspective or the other, I am interested in--in seeing, because you do talk about it around paraprofessionals having a diverse workforce, uh, is that going to be the case with the social workers?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yeah. Thanks for the--for the question. I think that, you know, the focus around diversity and, um, it certainly extends across every, um, role and position in the--the district.

And, you know, one of my--one of the things that I've-

-I've--I've learned and certainly learned in my--my time in Cambridge and the work we've done, um, and previously with--with Barbara Allen, our former Executive Director Of Human Resources, Ramon De Jesus, our former Director of Dynamic Diversity, um, is also just the role of--of how, um, you know, hiring leaders that also, um, represent a diverse backgrounds and experiences, um, is also an important way of also increasing the diversity of our of--our teaching staff.

And, you know, we have, um, over the last, um, several years reached a historic milestone of 25% of our teachers identifying as people of color.

And teachers are sort of a broad term that does include all of these roles, the coaches, interventionists, as well as the social workers.

You know, I definitely agree that, um, you know, the work of the social workers needs to be are rooted and grounded in practice that's--that's culturally proficient and responsive to the needs of students as well as their families.

In fact, what we hear most often is that, the work oftentimes of -- of some of the work of the social workers



is to help not just support, but sort of directly to the students, um, but helping families, um, to connect to wraparound services, to connect with other resources that are in the community, um, to other organizations, like Councillor McGovern mentioned earlier, um, so that, um, they have the resources and support they need, um, to be able to be successful, um, learners and then students.

Um, I would say that one of the things with our social emotional learning work, I mentioned earlier the work of Alice Cohen as the lead teacher in bringing those social workers together, but also as we are, um, I'm working across departments so that, um, not just the social emotional learning team but also the family engagement team, um, is also, um, really involved as we think about advancing this--this work, and that, um, Robin Harris and her team, along with the family liaisons are also--also connected as we think about the, you know, the team of folks that are supporting, um, the wellness of students so that they can, um, thrive academically.

So those are--those are some of the things that, you know, I would say also just from a hiring standpoint, one of the things that we have done is we have a dashboard

that's on our website.

We also, when we work with individual schools, um, they are given information to see sort of where they are as it relates to our overall district target related to, um, diversity and the percentage of - of staff that identify as people of color, um, as well as, um sort of where they are.

And--and so, um, that is something that we are--we are focused on from the hiring front. In terms of the training, um, aspect of it, you know, with the establishment of the Office of Equity Inclusion and Belonging and with Manuel Fernandez stepping into the Chief Equity Officer role, um, that work around training is not just for, um, um, teachers, but also for--for different roles.

And, you know, one of the things that, um, Mr. Fernandez is--is most passionate about is actually the work, um, coaching principals and coaching leaders, um, and so part of that work will be supporting, um, that and also including, um, our--our social workers and the culture responsive, um, practices and training, um, that's part of our, um, efforts, um, in the district.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you. So, through you, Mr. Chair, are you saying, Mr. Superintendent,

that all of these social workers, the ones that you've hired and will hire, will be participating in cultural competency training?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** All staff do, um, at both at the--at the school level, um, as we have identified actually as part of our school improvement plans for now a number of years, that culture proficiency training is the focus.

And district wide, we've done work particularly around instructional practices on culturally responsive teaching rooted in some of the work that Zaretta Hammond has written about. Um, so yes, that--that is a--a focus, not just of social workers, but of all our staff.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you. And then, what's embedded in this question, um, not looking at the numbers, you'll be up to how many superi--social workers?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Um, so, there will be a general and social worker at each of our elementary schools, so that's across, um, all--um, all 12 buildings.

Um, there also are, in addition--it's broader than just social workers, there also as part of the--the--the teams, there are adjustment Councillors also all--at all of

our elementary schools, as well as school psychologists.

At the high school, they're not just social workers in each learning community, um, but they're actually an additional couple of social workers that were added there, as well as, um--as well as, um, the guidance Councillors, of course, that are, um, housed at the high school, um, as--as well.

So, um, so that's, um, so, what this--what this piece in particular does is, it - it - currently, we still had, um, a number of our elementary schools that had half time social workers or have some allocation of social workers.

In some cases, schools were using school improvement funds to make them full-time, but not in all cases. Um, and so, this, um, sort of creates, um, a one-fold position allocation to each of our elementary schools.

That's a general and social worker, in addition to the adjustment counselor school psychologist.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, uh, Mr. Superintend, that's helpful. I--your answer was a bit long, I wasn't sure I understood clearly. Uh, do these go back to the diversity of whose being hired to fill these roles?

So, I--I understand, and I think you've said that they

would indeed, with teachers and others, have cultural competency training, and there's money in the budget to make sure that they have it. So, the only other question is, because I see that you've spoken about diversifying the staff in your go for teaching staff. Um, I'm just curious, are you using the money and resources to make sure that you hire a diverse social work staff as well? That's, sort of, a yes or no question.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yes. Yes. So, yes, it's the sort of the--the--the--the--succinct answer. Um, you know, our HR Department works closely with all our schools around looking at diversity as--as a priority across, um, every hire.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Very good. And then, through you, Mr. Chair, my second question, uh, in the budget document, 1% of the budget is going to the--to be utilized for professional development for teachers. So, my question is, what does that 1% of the budget actually buy us or buy the district, and does it include culturally responsive instructional practices?

1% just, you know, of a very--I mean, we have a huge budget and 1% is not a drop in the bucket. But, is it

sufficient to train an entire district in culturally responsive instructional practices?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yeah. So, it's-- it's--it's a really, um, helpful question to service here, because I think that, you know, it doesn't really reflect-- 1% doesn't really reflect sort of the resources that really actually exist around professional development, um, because a significant amount of actually the costs related to professional development is actually, um, time.

And so, um, there are required professional development hours, there are 35 additional hours, there are three professional development days at the start of the year, um, as well as, um, time that exists, um, at the school level that is created through the schedules, um, at the, um, at the individual school level.

Um, there also are, of course, our principals, our system principals and our instructional coaches that are, um, often leading, um, that professional development at the--at the school level, um, around, um, equity priorities and cultural proficiency.

Um, in addition to what is also in the budget, is a position in the Office of Equity Inclusion and Belonging,

um, for a curriculum and training specialist that also will be focused on aligning the professional development around, um, equity and cultural proficiency.

Um, right now, um, different schools may be utilizing, um, different consultants or outside partners, um, to support their work.

Um, we believe that we're sort of--we're at this point where we're looking at having a common framework around culture responsive teaching, around equity, around what it means to, um, have anti-racist practices, um, in the school district. And so, um, that I know is going to be a--a - a-- a high priority, um, as the Office of Equity Inclusion Belonging, um, launches, um, this summer.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Superintendent. This came up as a part of the city budget, so this is not a question that we're asking only of you.

So, I hear what you're saying. You're saying, yes, there is--that is sufficient because it's not just that. It just, it's very difficult when it's--when it's not located in any one place to get an assessment of just how much money is getting in and going into diversity equity.

I mean, you have a name for it, I don't have it in

front of me. Uh, so it's hard to put it all together, so it just looked like, to me, that you were spending this, what felt--felt like a small amount of money on such a large investment around training and cultural competency and diversity and equity.

So, it--it would be helpful going forward if there's a way that it could all be--even if it's somewhat redundant. You mention it in one place, but this one place that you can look and say, "This is all that we're putting into it."

And then the last thing, and this will require a answer is, do--do you know--do you know--can--is there a way to measure the impact of this training on children's education?

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yeah, it's--it's a-- it's a great question. And I think that one of the things that we are, um, really looking to do is to, um, you know, make more, um, concrete, what it is it in terms of actual, um, teaching practices and instructional practices, um, that reflect, um, culturally responsive instruction.

And--and so, using culturally responsive teaching in the brain is one framework, looking at what are some of those,--um, some of those, uh, actual instructional moves



that teachers are--are doing in the classroom is--is one way that we're--we're looking at the actual practice.

In terms of the actual student outcomes, um, there are pieces related to, um, our students, um, our school climate surveys. Um, there are some, um, you've heard me talk previously about, um, our teen health, uh, indicators that, uh, speak to whether or not students feel like they have, um, an adult that they trust and--and go to if they have a problem.

The idea is that this--this idea around belonging is what, um, is an important component around students being able to then succeed, um, academically as--as well.

Um, so those are some of the--some of the measures that we, um, look at, um, is we're thinking about and looking at, um, the experience of our-- of our students.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Superintendent. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Co-Chair Simmons. So, before we go into a second round of questions, Councillor--Councillor Zondervan, did you have any questions that you'd like to present?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr.

Chair. Um, I don't really have any questions, but, you know, share a lot of the concerns that have been raised by some of my colleagues.

I mean, you know, the fact that our--I just looked on the website again, our 3rd grade reading target for all students is 62% for 2021, which is down from 68%.

I don't--I don't understand how--how this is supposed to be possible. And--and, you know, when--when my colleague asked the question, I didn't really hear an answer.

There doesn't seem to be a plan, um, for how we get to 100%. And, you know, we have this conversation every year and it just, we're just--we're not even making progress, we're going backwards. We're going from 68% to 62%.

So, I, you know, I'm saying this every year and I'll say it again, I can't vote for this budget, it just doesn't get the job done. It does not ensure that all our students will have a quality education and it particularly does not address those students who have extra challenges, and we talk about every single time, that we should be able to give every single student a personalized plan that will ensure their success. And we're just not doing it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you for your

comment. Um, Councillor Nolan. You are the beginner of the second round.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. I think I'll just ask one of the couple questions, um, I had. And I sent these questions in advance. Of course, I have several more that have come up, but I--I want to ask them.

This question is around a question that was raised last year in the budget about evaluation of programs, one of the favorite areas that I know many of my colleagues on the School Committee ask routinely about, which is how is it that we're evaluating programs, reviewing them, and understanding that we are moving forward on things that actually work and that we're changing things that don't work.

And that the questions that I asked related to this are two pieces of information that seem as though-- hopefully they have been studied, we--last year I think we added a half time person to the evaluation and assessment, um, division. We have a full-time person which we had not had five or so or ten years ago.

And the two, um, concerns I had in terms of the data, one from the student data report in the appendix of the

budget shows that the four year adjusted graduation rate, which has been laudably high across the board for many, many students where districts completely struggled to graduate, ours are generally very high.

However, for Hispanic, uh, Latino-Latina students, which we have historically been far higher than the state there was--it was the group with the most significant and highest decline from--in adjusted four-year graduation rate. From 2016 to 2019, it actually went from 87% to 76%.

And there was a similar piece of data also at the high school level regarding, um, a concern about the Level-Up program and whether it's working and how it's being evaluated, because from a--at least based on, I know we don't have MCAS data now and I know we may not want that to be the only data of measurement, but there did seem to be--there was a--a stark decline from 2018 to 2019 for African American students in Grade 10 ELA.

And I--I didn't see anything in the budget. What -- what I'd love to see in the budget, which I will continue to say is, we know the budget addresses issues and it should be specific pointed concerns that we have, and this--this struck me as things that I would have expected to

say, "Wow, we saw this the last year and therefore in the budget we are doing this in order to address it."

So, I--I think that's an all wrap around question of how are we using our research and evaluation staff, what has been identified as the key significant issues? If these aren't the ones that have been identified and there's other things that worked on, feel free to tell me that there's other data that's much more salient and important for--for us.

But--but I have no sense at all of--of how that --how that division is informing your decisions in terms of moving forward with--with changes to the district that will enable us to have all students performing at high levels.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** So--so, based on the question, I'm gonna, um, ask Assistant Superintendent Dr. Nicole Gittens to, um, share a response in--in a moment.

But just to, um, start off more--more broadly. So, when we, um, have the Office of Research Assessment Evaluation and done some of the expansion, um, that additional position was actually--um, the focus was--was going to--was at the high school. And so, actually working with, um, with the high school team, um, you know, kind of

actually doing some of this work, so that we're able to utilize, um, whether it's, uh, different, um, student assessments and different, um, interim assessments that could be utilized, um, in not just areas like Level- Up, but other work at the high school.

Um, so that is--is part of how that infrastructure and part of that support is--is--going to be, um, doing on our work.

A lot of the work of this year, um, partly, you know, certainly impacted by the by the pandemic, um, has taken us off from some of the longer term planning and need of really having that sort of research agenda and cycle around, you know, particularly the program review.

Um, the focus has been on really this, um, sort of the tools around supporting instruction, the assessments support, the--the i-Ready, um, program that I spoke about earlier, um, having a systematic use of screeners.

Over the years, schools have utilized different SCL school screeners, for example, and so, um, having that be systematized so, uh, it can be, um, utilized district wide.

We've also had a number of different surveys that were utilized for different purposes. So, bringing greater

coherence to that, um, as well.

Last year when we talked about the--budget, we also--there was--there was also that half-time position that you described, was actually in partnership with the Biogen Foundation, um to look at the work around--around partnerships.

So, some of that work is actually looking at the work that, um, some of our nonprofit partners have been engaged in, uh, through the Biogen Star Initiative.

Um, you know, with the graduation rate, um, question, you know, it is an area that--that, you know, we, uh, can kind of look at more deeply, and similarly with the MCAST piece, I think that, as you know, you know, each, um,--there, we try to look at our growth data, to look at sort of changes over--over time and ones so that we're not just looking at sort of individual fluctuations that might happen because of individual cohorts.

Um, you know, we while we don't have MCAST data, we are trying to also utilize other measures, um, to inform our--our thinking.

Um, but at this point I would ask Dr. Gittens, who was our, um, Assistant Superintendent for secondary schools, to

also sort of comment on the, the work at the high school. I'm looking at, um, programming and supporting our students, um, at the high school level. Dr. Gittens.

**DR. NICOLE GITTENS:** Good evening, everyone. Um, so, thank you for the question. Um, looking at the data for our, um, Hispanic students, um, it's important to just aggregate and not make, um, judgment without that kind of information, so I'm not able to speak specifically to, um, the decline in--in graduation.

Um, however, we are working to build programs, in particular, our, um, early--early college program that would help these students who don't necessarily see themselves as, um, college going, maybe have engaged in the work, have engaged, um, in work earlier than they, you know--than they've made those connections with--with moving through the high school process and -- and sticking with school in order to make the next step in their lives.

And so, we're working on that. We're also looking at our Early Warning Indicator System that looks at course completion, where are students struggling, how do we intervene early and often, um, to provide support for those, um, for those students.



And so, we'll continue to do that work. This is my first year on the job, and so, um, in the midst of all of this, we haven't had time to really focus on the--the very specifics while trying to, um, bring students back in a pandemic and make sure that we're doing all we could remotely.

Um, the other thing that I'd like to speak to is the, um, Level-Up program, and whether or not it's working. I think the big question, um, more specifically that you submitted with around AP enrollment.

Um, and one of the things that, while the Level-Up Program is about increasing AP enrollment for a diverse body of students, it is also about making sure, and more importantly, about making sure that those students are successful in those classes and have the skills and access to [WIC 02:08:01 phonetic].

What is also important to note is that, there is a rich offering of courses at the high school, some that reflect more diversity than others, that our strongest students are choosing to enroll in those classes as opposed to AP courses.

So, AP is not the only goal, but to know that our

students are building the skillset that they need in order to be successful in AP courses in college level courses, um, period is--is - is--is the goal.

And so, students do still have free choice and select the courses that they feel most comfortable being a part of. And we recognize that we have, um, rich in rigorous courses at the high school, not just AP courses, um, for our students to engage in. I'm not sure if there was something else specific? Something else that you wanted to ask about that?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Well, I'll just follow up quickly, if I may, Chair Carlone. Um, the reference to AP, it was just a concern overall.

And I know it's a--it was probably impossible to do a full scale review this year because of the pandemic. However, particularly, with Level up, it's a signature program that meant--was meant to address de facto segregation.

So, I just--and yet

**DR. NICOLE GITTENS:** And it is continuing. Yes.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** But my question with AP is --

**DR. NICOLE GITTENS:** So, oh, the other--I think the other--the other piece about the AP in the course, um, the percentage of students who pass the AP courses?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah, the percentage of African-American students.

**DR. NICOLE GITTENS:** Right. I think it's really important to recognize that last year we were not in a controlled environment for AP, um, so the data that is reflected in the AP reports might not necessarily--we shouldn't give a lot of credence to that.

Students were testing remotely, we don't know what the environments were good, bad or indifferent. And so, that's something that we really do want to kind of put an Asterisk next to the AP scores from last year.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I appreciate that. I -- I encourage you to reach out to both the two charter schools in Cambridge, the--both CCSE and Prospect Hill had a much higher percentage. 57% of their African-American students who took the AP exam scored a passing score. This was last year, so they were in going the exact same closedown down and--and they had a much higher--they have typically, and this is true last year also, had a much

higher percentage of African-American students who actually successfully completed. It's a smaller size, but it's a much higher percentage than we have managed to do.

So, I appreciate it. Again, I know this has been a really terrible year, and yet we need to hold ourselves accountable. There's not a lot in this budget that does that. There's--there's--there's not the type of accountability that I had asked for last year, and just where this is--I won't ask a couple other questions, but I will say it is very, very hard for me.

I went back and listened to myself last year and I said I wanted to support the School Committee, and I still want to support the School Committee, but last year I expressed a real concern about there being no explicit plans to address the disparities and outcomes, there's not--there's not a program--there's not a plan for programmatic change that we know can work, there's not a plan for intensive tutoring, there's not a plan for individual success.

And--and also, yes, we opened our schools earlier for some kids and others, but there were tons of districts. This is not in the School Committee realm. I recognized

that there were many other factors that played into this that we were not--we did not open in time. I don't know, you're not addressing --

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay, I--I have to step in--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Chair Carlone, I want to say one thing. No, I need --

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** No, no, let me finish what I need to say. First of all, you're both having an excellent conversation. All conversation goes through the Chair.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** And the subject matter focus is the budget.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** This is the Finance Committee, so please, please get to that point.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Right. I'm explaining-- I'm explaining my vote last year on the budget, and my vote this year on the budget.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** It's a very long explanation.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Saying that -- no, that--that--I needed a budget, which I said last year, explicit plans to address this.

Last year I voted for it and I said I had pledged never to vote again for a budget that did not explicitly commit to high expectations with goals, with accountability.

And we have had goals for too long without accountability. So, it is--I cannot vote for the budget, the School Department budget this year. All means all, and I don't see it here.

And it's not, um, it really is a--a--a clarion call for more action, more bold, and also just accountability. Put in the budget that you unequivocally say, "This budget will get us to the goal that we set out," and I will vote for it. But I don't see it there, I didn't hear it in question--in the answers today. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. If any other Councillors have questions, please raise your hand so I know who to call on. I--we're seeing no hands raised. Councillor Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Um, Mr. Chair, one

question, if there's no other questions, then I would move that we vote on the School Department's budget.

Um, my question had to do with page 25, Equity Inclusion and Belonging Section. Under this section for training the budget list that this will include core racial equity training for all staffing and leadership, and it places the cost of \$50,000.

My question is, similar to the earlier one, is \$50,000 sufficient to adequately do this job and how much training will there actually be? Can we get a better sense of what the training consist of? Is the training voluntary or is it mandatory?

And the second question, which is in the same suit, is can we please have a clearer sense of what the Equity Fellows collaborative 50,000, so the \$50,000 allocation there in the Equity Scholars Initiative allocations are? And what are these, um, and what are these locations actually getting us?

Because what I don't see, and I'm not trying to jump on anyone else's bandwagon, is I'm trying to draw a line from the money we spend on, let's say, equity--equity and inclusion and in an outcome.

And so, if someone can speak to me briefly about that, that would be very helpful to me.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Dr. Salim.

**SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH N. SALIM:** Yes, thank you, um, for the question. So, the--so, the core--so the, um, you know, that specific, uh, funding that you described, um, in the Office of Equity Inclusion and Belonging is specifically around how to support the development of a core curriculum. So, it's about actually the, um, delivery across all the different, um, roles, but actually developing that core curriculum that's role based, um, that's the core curriculum that is required for staff and using, uh, figuring out either using, uh, professional development, um, and time, um, in order for that rollout to happen, um, that was something that was delayed, um, you know, with the delay in launching the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging.

There is--there are funds and across all of our departments, um, supporting professional development, including in our school budgets. And so, there are a lot of--of resources to be able to support that, as well as the time, um, that exists, um, in--in our collective bargaining



agreement, um, as well as in our--in our overall calendar.

Um, specifically on the Equity Fellows Collaborative. So, this was actually grew out of the Building Equity Bridges project and, um, and some, um, action research that was part of--of that project.

And what the Fellows Collaborative does is it--it supports students and families and--and staff and community members to develop, um, and implement projects that are focused on racial equity goals, such as, um, some examples include, uh, looking at developing an after-school program or an--or a new, um, approach around lesson planning.

Um, the Equity Scholars Initiative is an effort, um, that, um, along with the Equity Fellows Collaborative, that our incoming equity officer, Manuel Fernandez, will be overseeing and leading, that's about student-led efforts to, um, understanding racial equity and equitable practices amongst students and to develop leadership, um, for students.

And so these, you know, two efforts are really around, um, being able to, um, engage our community members, families, students and staff, um, in participatory research.

Um, and, you know, as it connects to, um, you know, outcomes, what we--part of the theory of action here is that also empowering students, um, and strengthening their leadership. We'll also broaden the--the opportunities for--for leadership and--and ultimately academic success as students engage in those, um, leadership opportunities.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Thank--thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Councillor McGovern has raised his hand. Councillor McGovern, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm gonna leave my camera off. Um, so, I just want to, um, I will be voting for this budget. I--I understand that, um, you know, we're continuing to try and get better results, and--and we all are, um, we're all sort of struggling with that. And--and given the resources in our community, we know, um, that we should be doing better.

Um, you know, given this year, in particular, and what everyone had to go through and--and, um, and how hard the School Committee and the administration and the teachers and the families worked, um, you know, I think--I don't

think voting down a budget is, even if it's just as a symbolic gesture, is really gonna help anything, particularly in this--in this year.

Um, you know, I'm not sure what it would get us, the money is what it is. And--and I want to respect the work that the School Committee, uh, did. They did a tremendous amount of work under very difficult circumstances around this budget.

Um, and so I hope we do vote it. I hope we do pass it, um, and I hope we continue to fight on as I know that--that we will. But, um, you know, this year has been brutal. And let's get moving and pass this move forward and really work more diligently to make things better. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Does anyone else wish to raise their hand? Councillor Zondervan, please, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, I do appreciate all the hard work and I recognize that this has been a very difficult year, and I have seen some progress.

In the past I said that I'm voting no for two reasons because, one, the budget is racist, and two, because it

doesn't address climate change. And I am--I am, you know, pleasantly, um, I won't say surprised, because I've known through my work on the Cambridge Board, uh, of this--of this ongoing work. But I'm glad that we are making progress on bringing climate change into the curriculum, particularly at CRLS, but really across the Board.

And so, I am seeing progress on that. And--and I think on--even on the, um, inequity side, we are seeing some progress. And so, I understand my colleague's remark, but I think that we have to keep the pressure on and--and continue to demand additional improvement, because it's still not good enough, we're--we're just not there yet. So, um, I will again be voting no this year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Any other council-- let's see here. Councillor--Mayor Siddiqui came first. Mayor Siddiqui.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** I yield to Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and then I'll go.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, you've been blessed by the Mayor. You go first.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Okay. Thank you.

Yeah, I'll be brief. I was--because I think there are a lot of areas we can--can keep pushing on and keep improving on. Um, I, you know, I respect my--my colleagues on the School Committee and all the work they've put into this. I believe that if the School Committee had voted, uh, on the budget--the School Committee--the School's budget, uh, unanimously in favor.

And so, I see my role as, you know, continuing to push on the school side for--for what we can do on things like municipal broadband, creating additional spaces for--for pre-K. Um, so I will be voting, um, yes on the--the School Committee budget tonight in recognition of that. I yield back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Mayor, you have the floor.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be very brief. I just wanted to say that, you know, I hear some of my colleagues on the results and the accountability and the list goes on. You know, I don't necessarily disagree. I think what I will say is this year has been a series of pivots. The long-term planning, all the work.

Believe me, I think if we had the time in the day, there's so much we would have been doing. Um, the reality is, you know, it was--we didn't have enough hours. No one had enough hours in the day because we were really going on and on to the next thing.

So, really, my hope is that we'll continue, uh, working together, um, and really, you know, looking at the various things that we need to be doing. We all agree. Um, I think the committee recognizes that we, um, have also gone through another superintendent search. Right?

So, we're--there's a lot of things that, um, the Committee, policy wise we've--we really, um, are passionate about and we're going to keep doing, but there's a lot of context here, too, so we need to vote on a budget.

Um, but what's not easy is really seeing the day to day, the countless meetings on this topic. And so, again, I'm just going to acknowledge my--my--my School Committee and colleagues once again, um, in their partnership throughout this year, uh, and appreciate, um, all their work. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mayor. I agree with your comments, and I've been very impressed by

the School Committee and the School Administration.

Uh, every curveball was thrown at you and your diligence and your dedication was pretty obvious. Um, yes, maybe the results haven't been what we expected, but this was a very odd year and, um, I'll be voting yes on the budget, needless to say.

And I thank everyone for the work. I think in many ways you have the hardest job, uh, of course, I will say the opposite, um, whenever I see you in person, but in reality, you definitely have the hardest job. And this was the hardest year educating so many children. And I give you a lot of credit and the benefit of the doubt. So, I would, um--

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** So, Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Are we moving toward--is there any more questions in queue? Because if not--because you--you--your words were quite prophetic, it might be good to end on a positive note, if there's no further questions in the queue, then I'd move that we--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, that's--yeah,

that's what I was going to do. But please do, Co-Chair.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Thank you. I would like the pleasure to move the School Department's Budget forward with a favorable recommendation.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - No

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - No

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-6, No-2, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, all. Um, move to adjourn.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** So moved.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes



Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, all. This has been, um, a very energetic series of Finance Committee meetings and we appreciate everyone's input. Have a good night.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Good night.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Good night.

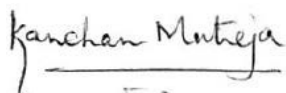
**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Good night.

**The Cambridge City Council Finance Committee adjourned at approximately 08:28 p.m.**

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, **Kanchan Mutreja**, a transcriber for Datagain, do hereby certify: That said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 19th day of January 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kanchan Mutreja". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Transcriber