



# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Craig A. Kelley  
City Councilor

David Maher  
Mayor  
Cambridge, MA

15 December, 2011

Mr. Mayor:

I write to re-iterate my concerns, as I stated to you this past Monday, that holding a roundtable on CPS-related issues, especially regarding the Innovation Agenda, at a time when most parents have absolutely no ability to observe the meeting is a very bad idea and undermines the credibility of any decisions based on such a meeting. I know of few working parents who will be able to make Monday's scheduled 4 PM roundtable and think it is a very bad idea to hold this meeting at the time you have proposed. As you know, there are a number of very serious questions being considered right now, from where to house the High School Extension Program to where to put the Amigos School to what time various K-5 Schools will start and more. How these questions are answered will have a direct and significant impact on many Cambridge families, as well as on CPS teachers and staff, and it is only fair that everyone impacted by the answers be given the opportunity to observe any relevant discussions, either in person or via TV or the internet.

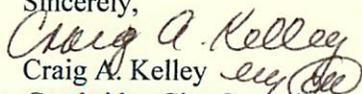
I understand that there are issues of timing involving bond issues or other time-sensitive procedures. I think we can meet those timing deadlines while still allowing the public to observe our discussions.

I suggest that we break our regular City Council meeting on Monday and hold the roundtable at 7 PM, at time when parents will be able to attend more easily, should they wish. We could also have it televised and archived on the City Council webpage, something we have apparently done for other roundtables. Given how we handled this past Monday's presentation about Central Square, with a two hour meeting on the subject in the middle of our normal City Council meeting, it seems only reasonable that we give the same public attention to the important issues involving our public schools.

On a similar note, as I said in the discussion of the proposed City-wide elementary school rezoning proposal submitted by the City Manager earlier this month, I do not appreciate being backed into a corner and forced to make decisions based on someone else's time schedule and without adequate time to review the facts, confer with my constituents and analyze the situation. To the extent that we may face time sensitive Council decisions regarding school issues in the future, I think it would be wise for the School Department and relevant City staff to be more proactive in their communications with the City Council.

Please let me know if I can be of any help in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Craig A. Kelley  
Cambridge City Council