Cambridge Street Upper School Construction Update

Questions & Answers for Families – September 2015

What's the plan for renovating Cambridge Street Upper School?

Five years ago, the City of Cambridge commissioned a study of school building facilities to identify priorities for major renovations. The King Open/Cambridge Street Upper School (CSUS) building was identified as a top priority, second only to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school building located at 100 Putnam Avenue.

Work is already underway for a major renovation and construction project that will include not only CSUS, but also King Open School, the Valente Branch Library and the Gold Star Pool. With four discrete components to this project, it has been determined that study, design, site preparation, and construction will take four years. The project is currently in the "feasibility study" phase.

Why didn't King Open and CSUS move during the summer?

Last May, a fire at 100 Putnam Avenue delayed the completion of the new Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Putnam Avenue Upper School campus. The relocation of these two schools has been delayed to December 2015, after which the "swing space" will need to be reconfigured to meet the needs of King Open and CSUS. It's now planned that King Open and CSUS will move just prior to the February school vacation week.

Why move mid-year, before the February break?

The project plan has always been that site work would not begin until late Winter or early Spring 2016. Therefore, although *relocation* has been delayed by about six months, the project as a whole remains on schedule. A mid-year move will keep the project on track, allowing the new school building to open in September 2019, as planned.

Delaying the relocation until the end of the year would push back the entire project by one full year, delaying the start of the next school slated for major renovation: Tobin School and Vassal Lane Upper School. In fairness to all schools, we need to minimize delays as much as we can.

Although there are challenges involved in moving mid-year, moving the school during the week before February vacation is an acceptable alternative. The school vacation week provides a natural break and transition time. Final building preparations can be completed by custodial staff during the February break, in preparation for students to report to school in the new location.

What will school be like for students, while teachers are packing and setting up their new classrooms?

In CPS, we are fortunate to have many different members of the school faculty beyond the core classroom teachers who can work in concert with one another to develop a rotation schedule where students will be engaged in their regular academic classes as well as a variety of enrichment opportunities.

Our current plan is for teachers and staff to be provided with time to pack up any materials that will not be needed immediately, to be moved over to the new building beginning the weekend of February 6-7. During the week preceding the February break, teaching and learning will proceed, along with field trips and other non-classroom activities devised at the school level. Sufficient teacher materials including all technology will still be available for teachers and students during this transition week.

CSUS teachers will have time set up their new classrooms while their students remain in the old building for a three-day transition period. There will be sufficient numbers of classroom teachers, specialists, interns and paraprofessionals at all times with students. Remaining classroom materials and equipment will be moved over to the new building on February 10th, and students will report to their new building on Thursday, February 11th.

School faculty and administration, along with district administrators and the Office of Student Services, are working closely together to minimize disruptions to student learning and ensure that student learning needs are met. We will keep you informed of further specifics as plans are developed.

What will be the impact on after-school programs?

If your child attends a program after school that takes place within the school building, the program will be moving into the new space at approximately the same time that the school relocates. Watch for more information from your child's program.

Will my child be able to ride the bus to school?

Many families will find that your child's eligibility to ride the bus may change. Our transportation policy states the following criteria for students to be eligible for bus transportation:

- All Junior Kindergarten (JK) through 5th grade students who must walk one mile or more, and all 6th through 8th grade students who must walk 1.5 or more miles to attend their assigned schools
- All JK – 5th grade students who must cross Massachusetts Avenue to get to school
- All JK – 8th grade students who must cross Fresh Pond Parkway, McGrath Highway, or Alewife Brook Parkway, or who must cross the railroad tracks at Sherman Street.

More details on your child's transportation eligibility will be provided to you later this fall. As always, students with disabilities who receive specialized transportation through their IEPs will continue receive special education transportation.
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Cambridge Street Upper School

Relocating February 2016 to 158 Spring Street (Top floors of the Kennedy-Longfellow School building)