

Vote Craig Kelley #1 *Because Schools and Neighborhoods Count!*
CITY COUNCIL LEADERSHIP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



Craig Kelley
Candidate for Cambridge City Council

Craig Kelley is committed to a public education system in Cambridge that is good enough to meet the needs of every child in the city – including the sons and daughters of City Councilors. Craig and Hope Kelley’s two sons attend the Baldwin School. Craig sees firsthand the challenges our public schools face today and supports reforms needed to meet those challenges.

Cambridge public schools have students of all abilities, and successfully teaching each of them can be difficult. We are lucky to have some of the most talented teachers, dedicated parents, and wonderful children anywhere, along with a \$124,000,000 school budget.

We have the resources to meet our educational challenges, but we need fresh City Council leadership to do so. The Council chooses the Mayor and approves the CPS budget. Accordingly, it is up to **both** the City Council **and** the School Committee to create a public school system that is **good enough to earn the confidence of every parent.**

SCHOOLS ARE A CITY COUNCIL ISSUE

In the past five years, almost 1 in 4 children in elementary grades 1 to 6 have left the Cambridge Public School system. Parents leave the system for many reasons, but far too many feel that Cambridge’s public schools are not good enough for their children.

Because many who leave are relatively affluent, our public school system is becoming less economically diverse. In 2004, a record 47% of all students qualified for subsidized meals because of low income.

This trend is leading us toward an economically divided school system, with the poor in public schools, the well-off in private schools, and the middle class squeezed in between – or out of Cambridge entirely.

There is no more important issue for the City Council to address than this trend toward an economically segregated school system and an economically divided city.

A LEADERSHIP VACUUM

For almost four years, the current City Council has drifted along with a “business as usual” attitude as our public schools struggled with plummeting enrollments and problematic test scores.

Only one Councilor’s children go to public schools, while two have opted out of the system. Other Councilors have older children or no children at all. The result is that current City Councilors have little personal experience with, or investment in, today’s Cambridge public schools.

Whatever the reasons, the current City Council, as a body, has been content to avoid responsibility for the direction of our Public School system.



The City Council Should Do Three Things To Improve Cambridge's Public Schools

Craig Kelley understands that the City Council has the responsibility to support Cambridge Public Schools through both its budget process and its selection of Mayor, who also serves as Chair of the School Committee. Craig believes that our public school system can, and should, be good enough to earn the confidence of every parent. Providing ample resources, currently \$124 million or about \$20,000 per student, is essential, but there is more the Council should do.

Here are three things Craig wants the City Council to do...

1 Set an ambitious, specific goal for high quality public schools.

The City Council's current education goal is too broad and should focus more on our Public Schools. Rather than the current "Strengthen and support public education and other learning in Cambridge for the benefit of residents of all ages," Craig advocates a more ambitious and focused goal for our public school system:

Support a public school system that is good enough to earn the confidence of every parent.

Adopting a results-oriented goal, even if not perfectly quantifiable, would lay the basis for the second thing Craig wants the City Council to do, which is...

2 Require the School Department to report on students who have left the public schools.

The School Department does not systematically survey parents who have opted out of the public schools. Craig wants the City Council to ask for basic data on these parents for the Council's annual review of the School Department budget. *How many students left? Why did their parents opt out? What would have kept them in our schools?*

This information will indicate how well our schools are meeting the basic goal of earning the confidence of all parents. It will also provide a better guide for deciding how CPS' budget and staffing levels should be allocated to earn that confidence.

3 Support School Committee actions to improve education, even when there are political costs.

In future years, the School Committee will have to make difficult decisions regarding staffing levels, budget allocations and possibly another school closure. Too often these decisions put politics first and education second. **Craig wants to make sure that educating our children is everyone's first priority.**



The Cambridge community does nothing more important on a daily basis than educate our children. Parents, families, and private schools all play vital roles, but the bedrock of our educational system must be good public schools, open to all equally, without regard to parents' resources or ability to pay. If we fail to maintain a good public school system, we fail in our responsibility to educate our children and we also undermine our ideal of equality.