

RUNNING HEAD: MOVING FROM PHILOSOPHY TO REALITY

MOVING FROM PHILOSOPHY TO REALITY: THE INNOVATION AGENDA IN THE
CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A thesis

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts

in

Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning and Child Development

TUFTS UNIVERSITY

August, 2013

ADVISER: Francine Jacobs

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Acknowledgements

This project could not have come together without the support and help of some amazing people. Thank you to all of you who have made my thesis possible. Thank you Superintendent Young for giving me the opportunity to follow through on my interests. None of this would have been possible without your support. Thank you Lori for the guidance you provided me during my fellowship and beyond. Without that experience I could not have begun to think about the Innovation Agenda with all of its nuances. Thanks also for participating on my committee, reading my drafts, and answering my many, many questions. Thank you Laurie for serving on my committee and pushing me to do the best work possible. Thank you to the many individuals who participated in my interviews and focus groups. Your perspectives were invaluable to this project. Thank you to my family and friends who have listened to me talk about the Cambridge Public Schools in 2011 ad nauseum for the past two years. Finally, thank you Fran for all of your input. Thank you for supporting me throughout this process and for your patience in allowing me to pursue the exact thesis that I wanted to, even if it took me two years to do it.

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Abstract

Recent federal education reform initiatives have encouraged local innovation in schools' attempts to improve learning for all students, and reduce achievement gaps among subgroups. This study examines one school district's approach. During the 2012-2013 school year the Cambridge Public School (CPS) district in Massachusetts adopted a plan, termed the "Innovation Agenda," to equalize access to high quality education for all students across the district. Using Kingdon's multiple streams framework of agenda-setting I explore: 1) why the Innovation Agenda focuses on its particular framing of the problem, and proposes its particular solutions, 2) which exogenous factors in CPS' broader ecology, and which endogenous factors within the city, helped shape the local policy agenda.

Based on document analysis and interviews, I construct a narrative of the decision-making process that resulted in the adoption of the Innovation Agenda. Results show that early in the process families spoke mostly about the middle school model and the impact changes would have on existing programs, followed by the organization and roll out of middle schools. Both topics were spoken about predominantly negatively. There was a decrease in the percentage of total, and negative, comments made by families about these topics after the Superintendent presented a revised version of the policy focused on these content areas. School communities were involved in the process to different extents. The Amigos and Tobin communities emerged as policy entrepreneurs, successfully achieving many of the changes for which they campaigned. Superintendent Young and Mayor Maher were also policy entrepreneurs. Timing appears critical to this policy innovation; the 22-month term for mayor and the fact that Mayor Maher and Dr. Young were in office at the same time seems to have moved the Innovation Agenda forward.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout American history, education has been viewed by many as a means for individuals to elevate their social status, and create better lives for themselves and their families. Public education is a universal right for children, until recently (with passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, Pub. L. 111–14) the only one they enjoy. Indeed, every state in the United States requires children of school age to attend a public school or an alternative program defined by the law (Education Commission of the States, 2010). Yet despite the availability of public education to all children, and the belief in social and economic mobility as a result of receiving such an education, a stubborn and significant achievement gap exists between students of higher and lower socioeconomic status (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011), and between Black students and Hispanic students, on the one hand, and their White counterparts, on the other (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). Attempts to address this achievement gap have been implemented for decades at local, state, and federal levels of government, within public schools, charter schools, and private schools, and with the collaboration of private organizations and individual citizens. But broad and sustained success has not yet occurred.

This study examined one school district's attempt to reduce this achievement gap. The Cambridge Public School (CPS) district in Massachusetts has adopted an ambitious plan, termed the "Innovation Agenda," to equalize access to high quality education for all students across the district (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011). By so doing, it argues, all students will receive a superior academic and social experience, and achievement gaps in the district will be eliminated. Understanding the development and implementation of this policy, now in its first year of

implementation, sheds light on how local school districts attempt to reduce achievement gaps among their students.

In this thesis I introduce recent education reform efforts to address the achievement gap. I then provide a review of several relevant literatures: those related to the achievement gap, child development literature on young adolescents, policy strategies, and how innovation occurs in organizations. Next, in the methods and data analysis sections, I detail my approach in this study. Then I report my findings, and finally I conclude by considering key “take-aways,” including potential implications of this research.

The Broader Policy Context

Over the past decade, the education establishment, at various levels of government, has tried to address inequality in education. In 2001 President George W. Bush enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110). This legislation made education reform a national issue and purported to face the problem head on (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110). The central tenets of NCLB were “increased accountability for States, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low performing schools; more flexibility for States and local educational agencies in the use of Federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children” (No Child Left Behind Act, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 2001). Although the NCLB Act failed to meet its goal for all public elementary school and secondary school students to meet or exceed proficient level of academic achievement, it has had a significant impact on the federal government’s approach to education reform (No Child Left Behind Act, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 2001; Usher, 2012).

Since the passage of NCLB many public and private entities have renewed their efforts in developing innovative approaches to solve the education crisis in the United States. The charter school movement is one example of independent schools experimenting with innovative practices. Charter schools are autonomous schools that receive public funding, and are opened and attended by choice (Bulkey & Fisler, 2003; Improving America's Schools Act P.L. 103-382, 1994). The charter school movement has grown rapidly; the first charter school opened in St. Paul, MN in 1992 and by 2007 there were almost 4,000 charter schools serving over 1.16 million children in the U.S. (Consoletti & Allen, 2007). To support the expanding number of charter schools, the Federal Department of Education created the Office of Charter Schools Programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Many charter schools have been found to successfully reduce achievement gaps between subgroups of students (Abdulkadiroglu, Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, & Pathak, 2010; Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, Pathak, & Walters, 2010; Dobbie & Fryer, 2011; Hoxby, Murarka, & Kang, 2009). One study of charter schools in New York City found that “on average, a student who attended a charter school for all of grades kindergarten to eight would close about 86% of the achievement gap in math and 66% of the achievement gap in English” (Hoxby, Murarka, & Kang, 2009). One particularly influential charter school is Harlem Success, embedded within the Harlem Children’s Zone. The Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) is located in the impoverished community of Central Harlem, New York City (Tough, 2008). The central tenets of the program are to create a pipeline of support by developing excellent, accessible programs and schools linked from one to another. By serving the entire neighborhood, HCZ can reach enough children to affect the culture of the community, transform the physical and social environments, and meet local need (Tough, 2008). An evaluation of the Harlem Children’s Zone found that the program

in middle school closed the achievement gap between Black and White students in mathematics and reduced it by nearly half in English Language Arts. In elementary school, engagement in the program closed the racial achievement gap in both subjects (Dobbie & Fryer, 2011). Although there is some contention about the results of charter schools, public school districts are under pressure to follow these examples. Policy-makers and the public continue to ask, “if charter schools can be successful, why can’t public schools?”

Recent Policy Initiatives

The expectation that mainstream public schools can and will achieve the same successes in closing the achievement gap as do some charter schools is reflected in recent policy initiatives (Abdulkadiroglu, Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, & Pathak, 2010; Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, Pathak, & Walters, 2010; Dobbie & Fryer, 2011; Hoxby, Murarka, & Kang, 2009). The federal Department of Education has continued to focus on reducing the achievement gap across the nation by promoting innovation at the local level. This theme can be seen in President Obama’s key education initiatives, Race to the Top (RTTT) and the Promise Neighborhood Initiative (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

President Obama created the Promise Neighborhood Initiative in 2010. Based on the Harlem Children’s Zone concept, the purpose of the program is to improve the education and developmental outcomes of children living in distressed communities by building a continuum of academic programs and family and community support services centered on a strong school, to carry children from “cradle to career” (Shelton, 2010). Promise Neighborhood grants are awarded to local school districts. Another piece of legislation that echoes the education reform movement’s focus on innovating to reduce the achievement gap is President Obama’s Race to

the Top Fund (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). A part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Race to the Top Fund encourages and rewards states that create the conditions for educational innovation and reform, achieving significant improvement in student outcomes. This fund provides states with the incentive and resources to explore new strategies of education, states then distribute these funds to local education agencies that are willing to adopt the state plan (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). As of August 2010, twelve states, including Massachusetts, have been awarded Race to the Top funding. In addition, Massachusetts was awarded a grant from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, a separate but related grant program, to improve access to and the quality of early childhood education in the state (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Both Race to the Top and the Promise Neighborhood Initiative provide a structure and funding for innovation composed at the federal level, but leave it to states, and then individual districts, to determine the details. These policies send a clear message from the federal Department of Education that schools and districts are expected to make strides to reduce the achievement gap. Within the generally broad parameters established by funding programs, it is the prerogative of individual schools and districts to determine how to do so.

The Proposed Study

As outlined above, over the past two decades a wide array of education policies have been implemented, including incentives and standards, charter schools as alternative institutions, the place-based approaches of Harlem Children's Zone and Promise Neighborhoods, and capacity building efforts such as Race to the Top. Each of these approaches represents an attempt to reduce the achievement gaps among subgroups of students. Most recently, with Promise Neighborhoods and Race to the Top, the federal government has focused on encouraging local

innovation, with the aim of increasing opportunities for schools and districts to develop new practices to improve learning for all students. Although the pressure to innovate in these cases comes from the federal Department of Education, the “rubber hits the road” at the local level where district and school administrators and staff make decisions that will directly impact their students and families. In local contexts, administrators and staff are accountable both to the state and federal Departments of Education and to their constituents. Balancing the needs and desires of these multiple constituencies presents a challenge. In addition, local schools and districts are attempting to innovate in the context of ambiguity around the optimal policy solution. Although many policy solutions have been tried, there is no agreement about – nor perhaps should there be – which approach most effectively reduces the achievement gap, in that particular kind of community, at a particular point in time. As a result, schools and districts have the freedom to choose one of the available options or to develop a new approach.

To understand current education reform at the local level I use a case study method to investigate one district’s attempt at adopting an innovative structural change. The case setting selected is Cambridge Public School (CPS) District in Cambridge, MA. CPS is currently “rolling out” a strategic plan called the “Innovation Agenda” that involves restructuring the grade organization of the district and enhancing the curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels¹. The ultimate goal of this plan is to increase achievement for all students across the district.

¹ Structural changes to the Cambridge Public School District make up the bulk of the Innovation Agenda, however the framework also discusses elementary school programming, expanded out of school time programming, and professional development opportunities for teachers. For the purpose of this study, I focus predominantly on the structural move from 11 JK-8 grade elementary schools to 11 JK-5 elementary schools feeding into four separate upper school campuses.

This case presents an opportunity to study the operationalization of the federal intention to close the achievement gap in a local school district. The objective of this thesis is to understand how the specific policy agenda for the Innovation Agenda in Cambridge was set within the broad landscape of possible approaches. Why does the Innovation Agenda focus on a particular framing of the problem to be solved and propose these particular solutions? Which exogenous factors in CPS' broader ecology helped shape the local policy agenda? Within Cambridge, which endogenous factors contributed to characterizing the local policy agenda? These questions are worth posing and answering because they provide a complete picture of how education reform occurred at one location on the national landscape. Understanding the factors that contributed to forming and implementing a policy agenda in Cambridge, MA can help other school districts to successfully execute education reforms.

I am well situated to conduct this study because I am currently an employee at one of the Cambridge elementary schools, and in 2012, I completed a Rappaport Institute Public Policy Summer Fellowship in the superintendent's office of the Cambridge Public Schools. The connections I developed through these positions have afforded me access to the necessary materials to complete this study. I also appreciate the challenges this direct involvement presents, and conducted this study with a conscious focus on maintaining objectivity.

Cambridge Public School District

During the 2012 – 2013 school year, the CPS first implemented its new plan, the “Innovation Agenda (IA),” designed to bring Cambridge, MA “into the 21st century” and prepare all students for the future. The adopted version of the Innovation Agenda is a departure from the district's previous Junior Kindergarten (JK) to 8th grade model. The reorganization resulted in 11 elementary schools serving Junior Kindergarten to 5th grade students, two of which house two-

way language immersion programs. In addition, the Innovation Agenda established an upper school network of four middle schools serving students in grades 6-8. Two of these upper schools are located in West Cambridge, one in East Cambridge, and one in Central Cambridge. Upper schools feed into one high school with four learning communities (cohorts of 400-450 students each with their own support staff), a school of technical arts, and a high school extension program. Under the adopted Innovation Agenda there is one Spanish language immersion school that is grades JK-8 that also feeds into the high school. The Innovation Agenda underwent a community-wide planning process in 2011-2012, and the 2012-2013 school year was its inaugural year (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011; Cambridge Public Schools, 2013).

The Innovation Agenda in Cambridge presented what could be called an “alignment challenge.” In developing the Agenda, district administrators worked to bring CPS’ practice into alignment with national policies promoting equal educational opportunity to all students. However, the IA was met with some opposition from some constituents who are in favor of retaining the JK-8 model (for examples, see CPS School Committee meeting minutes from 3/12/11 and 1/24/12). District administrators had to navigate these two competing influences to create a policy agenda that they believed reflected the needs of their constituents but still promises positive changes for the district. Considering how the agenda for the IA policy was established gives insight into the challenges that school districts face as they move from “business as usual” to implementing new policies and practices aimed to reduce achievement gaps.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To understand the changes underway in the Cambridge Public School District several domains of research literature need to be integrated. First I present detail on the problem at the heart of this study – achievement gaps among subgroups of students in the United States. Then I selectively review child development literature on young adolescents to situate the IA in its developmental context. The Innovation Agenda is predominantly focused on the middle school grades, so it is necessary to understand the developmental needs of these students and the conditions that will likely increase their achievement. I then highlight a number of policy strategies to create learning environments considered effective for middle school students.

Achievement Gaps

Despite the intended goals of the public education system, quality education is not available to all children in the United States. This situation is centrally implicated in the wide achievement gaps documented among children of varying racial/ethnic groups, and of various socio-economic statuses; furthermore, these two categories of groupings are often conflated. According to the 2008 Nations Report Card, there are significant gaps between White and Black students' scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) at age 9, 13, and 17 (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). Although these gaps are substantially smaller than they were in 1971, there clearly is still a significant difference in learning between White and Black students (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). This trend can also be seen in the achievement gap between White and Hispanic students. In 2008, Hispanic students scored significantly lower than their White peers on the NAEP at age 9, 13, and 17 (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). Similar to the trend for Black students, this represents a reduction in the gap between White and Hispanic students' scores since 1975, but still represents a significant disparity (Rampey, Dion,

& Donahue, 2009). Although these long-term trends show that progress has been made to reduce achievement gaps, it is clear that we have a long way to go to completely equalize the education system.

Another measure that reflects the differing experiences of White students and students of color is the school dropout rate. Dropping out of high school is related to a number of negative outcomes, including living in low income circumstances, high unemployment, high rates of incarceration, and poor health (Chapman, Laird, & Kewal Ramani, 2010). Between October 2007 and October 2008, Black and Hispanic students in public and private high schools had higher dropout rates than did White students. The dropout rate was 6.4% for Blacks and 5.3% for Hispanics, compared with 2.3% for Whites. In 2008, the dropout rate of students from low income families was about four and a half times greater than their peers from high-income families (Chapman, Laird, & Kewal Ramani, 2010).

Access to post-secondary education also varies by students' income and ethnicity. Of 2006-2007 graduates from public high schools where the percent of minority students was greater than 50%, approximately 30.8% attended four-year institutions in the subsequent school year. For their peers in public high schools where the percent of minority students was less than 5%, approximately 46.8% of 2006-2007 graduates did the same. Minority students are far less likely to attend university than are White students, and the nature of the schools that the many students of color attend greatly reduces the likelihood that they will attend a four-year university.

The same trend can be seen in terms of income. In public schools where the percent of students approved for free or reduced price lunch is low – between 0-25% – approximately 52.1% of 2006-2007 graduates attended four-year institutions in 2007-2008; this figure for graduates of public schools with high percentages of students qualifying for free or reduced

lunch – 70%-100% – is approximately 26%. Low income students are far less likely to attend a four-year university than are their higher income peers. Similarly to with race, the population of the student body at a public school dramatically impacts the likelihood that students will attend a four-year college (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). These findings provide further evidence of the achievement gap between high and low income students and between White students and students of color. A student's access to opportunity in the form of attending a four-year university is strongly correlated to his/her socioeconomic status and race.

In addition to the clear social justice implications of these factors, preparing all children for successful careers is essential for the United States' economy. America's status as a world superpower is due, in large part, to superior knowledge, innovation, and stability. This privileged position is being threatened as many other countries in the world are working hard to catch up to the United States (Cooper, Hersh, & O'Leary, 2012). In order to be competitive in the global market place, the United States needs to have a well-educated workforce. Compared to other advanced industrial nations, U.S. students are in the middle to the bottom of the pack in terms of mathematics, science, and general literacy achievement. If the United States continues its current course, other nations will continue to outstrip the United States in terms of education, causing the American standard of living to fall relative to those nations (The New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2007). In addition, American children will compete for jobs in a global economy against workers from India, China, and other countries around the world. To make sure that American workers can thrive in the global marketplace it is necessary to invest in education (Cooper, Hersh, & O'Leary, 2012). High quality education is not only an equity issue but will dictate the United States' economic standing in the world.

Adolescence and Schooling

Students typically enter middle school at age 10 or 11 and graduate to high school at age 14 or 15. Adolescence is a complicated stage of development that represents an intense period of intellectual, emotional, and physical development (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). In the United States, adolescents spend more time in school than anywhere else. It is therefore important to take into consideration the changing developmental needs of students as they move through adolescence to determine how to structure their school experience and to understand how the school context in turn impacts their development (Eccles & Roeser, 2009).

To begin, during adolescence, students undergo significant cognitive developments. The human brain is plastic and continues to change throughout the lifespan. During the adolescent years rapid development is seen in the frontal lobe, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which is involved in executive functioning (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008; Larson, 2011). Perhaps as a result of these neurological developments, adolescents experience significant cognitive developments such as an increased ability to think abstractly, understand consequences and self-regulate to avoid negative consequences, and the ability to plan for the future. It is also possible that adolescents' experiences push them to develop cognitively and therefore drive neurological changes in the brain (Larson, 2011). Either way schools provide a context to spur on, and to scaffold cognitive and neurological development during this critical period.

One hallmark of adolescence is the emerging ability to engage in abstract thinking. In the teenage years, youth move away from thinking "in black and white" – the way that younger children do – towards thinking "in shades of grey," as do adults (Piaget, 1950). In other words, youth begin to think in terms of possibilities; they rely less on a sense of a "right way" or a "right path" than younger children, and become active drivers of their own decisions (Elkind, 1967;

Salmela-Aro, 2011). As part of developing abstract thinking skills, adolescents begin to develop and interject their own thoughts and beliefs, including complex thoughts about broader concepts such as religion and politics (Elkind, 1967; Salmela-Aro, 2011). As they develop their own opinions, youth begin to question authority and strive to explore their own interests (Roeser, Eccles and Sameroff, 2000; Salmela-Aro, 2011).

Adolescents' increased ability to engage in abstract thinking allows them to develop a more complex sense of morality, characterized by a move away from behaving according to rules and expectations to a more self-reflective form of moral reasoning (Kohlberg & Hersch, 1977; Morris, Eisenberg, & Houlberg, 2011). This provides adolescents a better understanding of others' emotions and experiences and access to feelings of greater empathy towards them (Kohlberg & Hersch, 1977; Morris, Eisenberg, & Houlberg, 2011). Moral reasoning is also tied to social problem-solving and negotiating skills. Adolescents who reason about morality at more mature levels have higher-level social problem solving skills and coping. Importantly, youths' understanding of morality is based in their experiences. Moral development stems from observing and modeling behaviors, beginning in early childhood usually in the context of the family. In adolescence, youth extend these experiences to include interactions with peers (Morris, Eisenberg, & Houlberg, 2011). As a result, broader contexts such as neighborhoods and schools come to be the primary context for adolescents' continuing development of moral sense.

The development of complex abstract thinking in the middle school years provides an opportunity for schools to engage students on a different intellectual level than in younger grades. During the middle school years, adolescence are ripe to get excited about learning due to the development of abstract thinking and their resulting interest in a variety of topics (Elkind, 1967; Salmela-Aro, 2011). When the school experiences fits students' needs students thrive

academically, socially, and emotionally as well as develop morally (Kohlberg & Hersch, 1977; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Students thrive in schools that provide opportunities to exercise autonomy by choosing topics and tasks. In addition, meaningful curricula that give students the opportunity to take control of their own learning are related to school engagement, achievement, and help students to develop a love of learning (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000).

Another advance of cognitive development that occurs in adolescence is the ability to understand the consequences of one's actions and to self-regulate one's behavior. Self-regulation involves adapting one's behaviors, thoughts, attentions, and emotions to one's context. Adolescents are required to demonstrate high levels of self-regulation when adjusting to their new roles in their families, in school, and in social groups. Strong self-regulation skills result in positive developmental outcomes, and support students as they work to achieve their academic and social goals (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008).

These skills come to bear when making decisions. Decision-making involves considering outcomes, possible risks and benefits, attitudes about the possible behaviors and outcomes, and what others expect. In addition to this rational process of decision-making, several non-cognitive components are involved which are much more reactive and based on affect (Gibbons, Houlihan, & Gerrard, 2009; Halpern-Felsher, 2011). Depending on their stage of development, adolescents will give more weight to one of these two approaches. Young adolescents make decisions in large part based on their perceptions of what others are doing (Gibbons, Houlihan, & Gerrard, 2009). They struggle to ignore peer influence because their self-regulation skills are still developing (Haydon, McRee, & Halpern, 2011). Due to their more emotional impulsive decision-making, young adolescents are much more likely than adults to take risks. However, as

their impulse control and ability to weigh consequences develop, youth are more able to take a more reasoned approach to decision-making (Gibbons, Houlihan, & Gerrard, 2009).

In addition, adolescent youth begin to plan for the future and set long term goals for themselves that require sustained self-regulation to reach (Duckworth, Grant, Loew, Oettingen, & Gollwitzer, 2011; Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008). To be successful, youth must consider how their current decisions will impact future opportunities and plan accordingly. These skills necessitate a developmental shift (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008). To successfully attain goals, adolescents must choose and commit fully to the goal and develop and implement a strategy for reaching it. This requires self-discipline and sustained self-regulation, two cognitive skills that are still developing over the course of adolescence. The strength of these cognitive skills is related to youths' academic achievement such that adolescents with high levels of self-discipline achieve at higher levels than their peers with lower levels of self-discipline (Duckworth et al., 2011).

During adolescence, youth are exposed to new circumstances, including middle schools, which present opportunities to develop and practice implementing self-regulation (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008). Teachers can help adolescents set goals and stay on track to reach these goals by modeling strategies and providing opportunities for students to practice using them (Duckworth et al., 2011). In this way, schools can help adolescents develop sustained self-regulation skills so they can be successful. In addition, schools provide a safe space for students to experiment and take risks in a pro-social way. Adolescents must experiment with different identities and experiences to learn to navigate a variety of circumstances they will be faced with in adulthood (Haydon, McRee, & Halpern, 2011). Schools can play an important role in creating a safe space for this positive exploration.

In addition to developing cognitively, adolescents undergo significant social developments. One of the hallmarks of adolescence is the intense focus of youth on their peer group. Young people spend increasing amounts of time with peers, with less adult supervision. Youth also increasingly value their peers' expectations and opinions (Brown & Larson, 2009). The increased autonomy typically experienced in adolescence provides an opportunity for youth to experience a variety of different situations and practice using the social skills learned in childhood. To encourage students to be motivated and engaged in school, teachers can employ their social motivation for academic purposes by providing opportunities for collaboration and group work (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000).

A major social task of adolescence is beginning to develop an adult identity. As part of this, youth look for clues in their current situation as to the adult they will become (Elmore & Oysterman, 2012). This means that they are very susceptible to stereotypes and messages from their peers and adults (Elmore & Oysterman, 2012). One particularly salient factor in identity development at this age is gender. First of all, the physical changes that take place during adolescence are gender dependent (Galambos, Berenbaum, & McHale, 2009). These changes highlight and contribute to a youths' gender identity. Secondly, adolescents of different gender tend to participate in different activities and have different interests (Galambos, Berenbaum, & McHale, 2009). As a result youth come to identify themselves by the stereotypically gendered activities in which they engage. Youth also tend to associate with members of their same gender because of their engagement in the same activities.

Finally, gender identity is related to academic success. When developing a sense of self youth are more likely to exhibit behaviors that they perceive to be congruent with their gender. This often relates to academic pursuits. For example, stereotypically girls "try harder" in school

and are more organized, so adolescent girls are more likely to value academic effort than boys (Elmore & Oysterman, 2012). Furthermore, when a behavior is gender-congruent, challenges are interpreted to mean that that behavior is important rather than impossible, so effort is seen as meaningful (Elmore & Oysterman, 2012). As a result, girls may appear more likely to persevere when faced with challenges in school than are boys.

As part of coming to understand themselves better, many young people question what it means to belong to their ethnic and/or racial group. Exploration of ethnic identity can be initiated when a youth has an experience that forces him to confront his ethnic identity (Phinny, 1993). At this point the youth might express an interest in learning more about his/her culture and consider prejudices commonly held against his/her ethnic group (Phinny, 1993). Similarly to gender identity, ethnic identity is related to academic success. Students who view academic success as congruent with their ethnic identity are more likely to work hard on academic tasks (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006). The relationship between ethnic identity and academic success is stable, and predicts grade point average over time (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006).

Students also gather identity building information from their classroom climate and close friends. At the classroom level, social norms can be supportive of or in opposition to academic success. If norms encourage students to engage in learning activities, students are more likely to perform well in school, whereas if norms discourage students from completing assignments, paying attention in class, doing homework etc., then students are less likely to be engaged in school and more likely to experience discipline problems (Nelson & DeBacker, 2008). Youth clearly integrate messages from their peer group as they come to conceptualize themselves as students. In addition, students who see themselves as accepted members of the class have higher self-efficacy are more motivated to learn, and achieve at higher levels (Nelson & DeBacker,

2008). To thrive academically students need to feel safe and accepted by their peers. At the dyad level, adolescents' best friends have a prominent influence on their beliefs and values. As a result, individual's academic orientation is closely related to their friends' academic orientations (Nelson & DeBacker, 2008). Adolescents' self-identity is closely related to the identities of both the friends they choose to spend time with and their classmates.

Adolescents' academic self-identity is correlated to their success in school. Student's perceived self-competence is related to their actual academic performance; their decisions to engage in school are largely depended on whether they feel capable and supported to meet the challenges they are presented with (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Teachers can help students develop academic self-competence by emphasizing the value and purpose of activities and by providing support and encouragement to overcome challenges (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Students' sense of competence in school is largely shaped by their teachers' attitudes towards them. Studies have shown negative effects of differential treatment from teachers based on race/ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status (Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). If students perceive that their teacher has low expectations for their achievement, they tend to perform at lower levels than students who perceive that their teacher has high expectations for their achievement (Eccles & Roeser, 2009). This can led to increased anxiety, disidentification with the school context to protect self-esteem, and disengagement from school (Eccles & Roeser, 2009).

By holding high expectations for all students, schools can avoid these reactions (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004). Schools can also place an emphasis on hiring and retaining caring and respectful teachers, as having such teachers is related to improved academic, social, and emotional functioning over time (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Schools can

take steps to ensure that academic achievement and sustained effort become a part of all students' self-identity. First of all, schools can work to change social messages sent to students so that academic success comes to be congruent with both male and female identities, as well as all ethnic identities (Elmore & Oysterman, 2012). Secondly, schools can create learning communities where all students value academics to hopefully have a global impact on each student's approach to learning. Finally, by taking active interventions to make sure that all students feel accepted by their peers, schools can establish a safe environment where all students are able to succeed. By focusing on these elements, schools can support students to develop self-identities that include putting effort into schoolwork and valuing academic success.

Overall, the new cognitive and social skills developed in adolescence allow students to become active drivers of their own development. Youth now have the tools to navigate a wide variety of situations, reflect on their experiences, and draw their own conclusions (Elkind, 1967; Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008; Gibbons, Houlihan, & Gerrard, 2009; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Schools can take advantage of and support this explosive phase of development. To do so, schools must meet the needs of adolescents to foster academic, social, and emotional functioning. In turn this will help youth further develop cognitive and social skills (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000).

Considering adolescence as a distinct stage of development, different from childhood or adulthood, has led some practitioners to propose building schools around that notion. To engage adolescent students in school the Association for Middle Level Education (2006) suggests that educators:

1. Ensure that all middle level students participate in challenging, standards-based curricula and engaging instruction, and that their progress is measured by appropriate assessments, resulting in continual learning and high achievement.
2. Support the recruitment and hiring of teachers and administrators who have strong content knowledge and the ability to use research-based instructional strategies and assessment practices appropriate for middle level students.
3. Support organizational structures and a school culture of high expectations that enable both middle level students and educators to succeed.
4. Develop ongoing family and community partnerships to provide a supportive and enriched learning environment for every middle level student.
5. Facilitate the generation, dissemination, and application of research needed to identify and implement effective practices leading to continual student learning and high academic achievement at the middle level. (Association for Middle Level Education, 2006)

The Association for Middle Level Education asserts that, under these school conditions, adolescents will excel (National Middle School Association, 2006), but middle level educators and administrators in local school districts across the country must determine for themselves how to structure their schools to meet the needs of adolescent students.

Federal Policy Guidance

Despite some practitioners' beliefs in focused approaches to middle school education, (see, for example, Byrnes & Ruby, 2007; NMSA, 2003; Parker, 2009) federal education policy does not highlight the middle grades. Neither of the two major federal education initiatives of the

past two administrations – No Child Left Behind (NCLB) under President G.W. Bush, and Race to the Top under President Obama – specifically focuses on these grades.

NCLB refers to “public elementary schools and public secondary schools” and “public elementary students and public secondary students,” but generally does not refer specifically to middle schools or middle school students (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110). There are a few mentions of middle schools but only in the context of policies that apply both to middle and secondary schools, such as the Close Up Fellowship Program, Advanced Placement programs, and drop out prevention programs (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110). Middle school teachers are also not treated separately from elementary and secondary teachers, appearing only in statements such as “middle or secondary school teacher” and “elementary, middle, or secondary school teacher” (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110). Similarly, Race for the Top refers to “elementary and secondary education” without specifically treating middle school education (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-5). The term “middle school” does not appear at any point in the law. Instead section 14013, Definitions, states “the terms ‘elementary education’ and ‘secondary education’ have the meaning given such terms under State law” (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009).

The only instance where middle school programming is identified separately is in NCLB, as part of Project Citizen, a program with limited purposes and scope. Here the law states that The Center for Civic Education will receive funds “to provide a course of instruction at the middle school level on the roles of State and local governments in the Federal system established by the Constitution of the United States” (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110). Given the lack of specific mention in either of these federal initiatives, it is clear that the

middle school grades have received little explicit attention in this recent wave of reform from the Federal Department of Education.

In the absence of clear guidance about how to structure and restructure middle level education from the federal level, local school districts have elected to choose among several different approaches. First, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recognizes six common grade categories: elementary schools (grades K-5 or K-6), elementary/middle schools (usually grades K-8), middle schools (usually grades 6-8 or 7-8), middle/high schools (usually grades 7-12), high schools (usually grades 9-12), and K-12 schools (grades K-12) (The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010). There are clearly a wide variety of approaches represented just within Massachusetts. Districts can choose which of the aforementioned approaches they feel is best. The biggest and most controversial change in the Cambridge Innovation Agenda is the switch from a JK-8 elementary school model to four separate middle schools. There is a large body of scholarship on the middle school grades and over the years many different models have been popular, but there is disagreement about the wisdom of middle schools versus schools that include grades K-8 (Alsbaugh, 1998; Byrnes, & Ruby, 2007; Coladarei & Hancock, 2002; Franklin & Glascock, 1998; Offenber, 2001; Parker, 2009).

The primary argument for creating separate middle schools is that isolating the middle grades allows educators to cater to the specific needs of middle school students (Byrnes & Ruby, 2007). Proponents of middle schools argue that separating adolescents enables staff familiar and comfortable with the developmental stage to deliver best practices targeted towards these students, such as a rigorous instructional climate tailored to their developmental needs, relevant curriculum, and differentiated and diverse instruction (National Middle School Association,

2003; Parker, 2009). Some research suggests that when middle schools follow these guidelines students show academic and socio-emotional gains (Backes, Ralston, & Ingwalson, 1999).

Despite these approaches that are tailored to middle school aged students, several studies have found that 6-8 grade students attending K-8 schools show higher achievement in English and mathematics than do their peers in middle schools (Coladarei & Hancock, 2002; Franklin & Glascock, 1998; Offenberg, 2001). Reasons for this effect may include fewer transitions, smaller and more cohesive communities in K-8 schools, and the fact that middle school students in K-8 schools are the “top dogs” serving as role models to younger students (Alspaugh, 1998; Offenberg, 2001). However, some of the discrepancies in student achievement between middle schools and K-8 schools may be accounted for by the fact that K-8 schools often serve a different population than do middle schools. K-8 schools tend to serve communities with lower rates of minority and low income students – populations that tend to have lower achievement scores – than do middle schools (Byrnes & Ruby, 2007). Since there is no agreement about which structure best serves students in the middle grades, local districts can make a case for choosing either model.

Chapter 3: Methods

This present case study of the Innovation Agenda in Cambridge Public Schools applies an analytic framework to a local policy agenda focused on school based reform. The Innovation Agenda marks a departure from the status quo, and was passed in the face of some considerable adversity from a number of constituent groups. I hope to uncover why this policy was passed now and how this particular solution was crafted to address the problem.

Study Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- Why does the Innovation Agenda focus on a particular framing of the problem of the problem to be solved and propose these particular solutions?
 - What are the key decision points that framed this initiative?
- Which exogenous factors in CPS' broader ecology helped shape the local policy agenda?
- Within Cambridge, which endogenous factors contributed to its development?

Why a Case Study Approach?

A case study is one type of study design in qualitative research. It is an opportunity to think about a particular place in depth through multiple sources of information. To conduct a case study a researcher examines one delimited system, through in depth data collection and analysis of multiple information sources, over a period of time. Throughout the research process the focus is placed on exploration and description. The final product is a case description of case based themes. There are many types of case studies, involving both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2007). This thesis represents an embedded analysis of an instrumental case study. To learn more about the phenomenon of innovation in local school districts aimed at reducing

achievement gaps I am considering an innovative attempt at education reform in one bounded case, the Cambridge Public School District. More specifically, I am focusing on one element of the Innovation Agenda, how the agenda was set.

Since federal policies encourage innovative practices in districts across the nation, it is important to study districts at the forefront of these education reforms so that other districts can learn from their experiences. Massachusetts is one of the first Race to the Top fund recipients, and within the state Cambridge is a front-runner district on the cutting edge of education reform.

Cambridge as both a Modal, and a “Best Case,” Example

Cambridge is a densely populated city of 6.3 square miles just north of Boston Massachusetts. In 2010 the population of Cambridge was 105,162 people: 62.1% of the population was White, 11.8% Black, 15.1% Asian, and 7.6% Hispanic. Of the total population, 15.1% lived below the poverty level. Cambridge is home to several colleges and universities, and in 2010 73.1% of people over age 25 held a bachelors degree or higher. The median income was \$69, 017 and 11.4% of the population was under the age of 18 (US Census Bureau, 2013). Perhaps due to its geographic location and population, Cambridge is considered a liberal city; in 2012, approximately 57% of all registered voters were Democrats (Massachusetts 2012 Election).

Cambridge Public School District consists of 6,222 students, 38.5% of whom are White, 29.7% are Black, 13.7% are Hispanic, and 11.8% are Asian (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013). At the time the Innovation Agenda was under discussion, the district consisted of 12 elementary schools and one high school. In 2011, Cambridge spent \$26,305 per pupil compared to \$13,361 in the state (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013). Cambridge ranked 209th in the state based on

2011 third grade English Language Arts standardized test scores and 204th in the state based on 2011 third grade math out of 611 public school districts and public charter schools (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011; “Top ranked 3rd grade districts,” 2011).

Over the past decade, the Cambridge Public School District has undergone several education reforms. Most drastic was the consolidation of 15 elementary schools into 12 in 2003. This change was designed to balance the budget and to close under enrolled schools (Cambridge Public Schools, 2003). CPS also continually strives to improve education by standardizing curriculum and expectations across the board. These efforts have had a particular focus on the middle grades through initiative such as the Middle School Task Force and Blue Ribbon Commission (see Chapter 4).

CPS appears to have strong community supports that likely contribute to its success. Although these extra supports mean that Cambridge is not an average school district, it is still useful to study this district’s approach to education reform. Due to the input from universities and other community organizations in Cambridge one would expect that the innovation occurring in Cambridge is unusual, perhaps especially creative, and has the potential to yield significant results. The additional supports also increase the likelihood that the intervention will be sustained, providing a long-term view of how these types of changes will impact school districts. Studying the agenda setting process in a district such as Cambridge, where it is quite possible that policies have an above average chance of being developed, implemented, and sustained effectively provides powerful insight into how the local policy agenda is set. The abundance of resources available in Cambridge gives the policy the best chance possible for success, and therefore allows one to study the policy itself, without having to consider limiting

factors to the same extent necessary in a less well off school district. Cambridge Public School District is also undergoing innovation by choice, rather than by state mandate. I believe that this variable is likely to have profound effects on attitudes towards the changes at all levels of the organization.

On the other hand, Cambridge is similar to many districts. It is a diverse community with a complex demographic profile. There is a large upper middle class and a substantial low income population, as well as at least four languages that are widely spoken (Cambridge Community Development Department, 2011). The achievement gaps within the district reflect national achievement gaps: White and Asian students perform significantly higher on standardized tests than do their Black and Hispanic peers (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011; Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). So although other aspects of Cambridge make it unique, lessons learned in Cambridge may also be applicable to other communities in the United States.

The Research Process

To understand how the policy agenda for the Innovation Agenda was set, I conducted two phases of data collection. In the first phase, I reviewed documents gathered by the superintendent of CPS over the past two years that he determined were important to the shaping of the Innovation Agenda. In the second phase, I conducted three key informant interviews and two constituent focus groups. This research transpired between August 2012 and May 2013.

Data sources and instruments. The main data source for this study is documents gathered by Superintendent Jeffrey Young of CPS. In addition individual instruments were developed for the focus groups and for each of the key informant interviews.

Documents. The documents reviewed include district publications, meeting agendas and minutes, notes from community meetings, correspondence with School Committee members, input from students and families, research articles, newspaper articles, and many others (Appendix A). A few specific examples are the superintendent's presentation on the Innovation Agenda to the School Committee, The Amigos School's position statement on the Innovation Agenda, a proposal from the Tobin school community on how to adapt the Innovation Agenda, and postings to various schools' list serves. It is important to note that although the documents contain notes from all School Committee meetings devoted to the Innovation Agenda in early 2011 they do not include notes from any of the school community meetings held by the superintendent's cabinet at each of the twelve elementary schools. However the Chief Planning Officer for CPS since 2010, who attended almost all of the School Committee and community meetings felt that most of the points made in the community meetings were also covered in the public comment sessions, so are likely represented in my data.

Key informant interviews and focus groups. The second phase of analysis involved key informant interviews and focus groups (see Appendix B for instrument and protocol) with members of the constituent groups included in my analysis. From the district staff constituent group I interviewed Superintendent Jeffrey Young and Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Lori Likis. From the School Committee group I interviewed Councillor Maher who was mayor when the Innovation Agenda was adopted. I decided not to interview the other School Committee members as they had each made many public statements and I felt I had a good understanding of their opinions on the Innovation Agenda and the decision-making process.

I also held two focus groups, one for families and one for teachers. I recruited families by emailing several parent organizations in Cambridge: the Cambridge Citywide School Advisory

Group, the Like-Minded Parents group, and the SPED PAC parents group. The families focus group consisted of parents with children currently enrolled in one of the Cambridge upper schools. The teachers focus group included participants who currently teach at three of the four upper schools and taught in one of the 12 JK-8 elementary schools prior to the Innovation Agenda. Interview questions were rooted in the findings from my first phase of analysis and included questions about key decision points, key controversies and their resolution, and the power dynamics involved in the shaping of the IA (Appendix B). Conducting key informant interviews and focus groups allowed me to triangulate data to construct a deep and accurate narrative of the development of the Innovation Agenda.

Institutional Review Board review. This study was granted Institutional Review Board (IRB) exempt status by the Tufts University Social, Behavioral, and Educational Research Institutional Review Board, since the interviews were conducted with school employees (with the permission of department heads), public servants, and in the case of parents, consenting adults who had already made their opinions about the Innovation Agenda publicly known.

Data Preparation and Analysis

I take what Miles and Huberman (1994) call a “soft nose positivist approach” to data analysis, using both systematic research methods and interpretation to examine a social process. This use of structured data analysis techniques, such as matrices, and qualitative interpretation makes for a strong analytic structure.

Document review. I took several steps when reviewing the documents. My first task was to establish a timeline of consequential decisions that were made regarding the development of the Innovation Agenda. I focused on the period of time leading up to the drafting of the first version of the Innovation Agenda, presented to the School Committee in February 2011, and in

the period from February to April 2011 as the policy was revised into the final version of the Innovation Agenda. I determined which events and key decision points to include in the timeline in an interview with Lori Likis (CPO). My second task was to organize the documents chronologically.

Once the chronological structure was completed, I used an open coding approach to identify the *content* and *valence* of statements that appeared at each time point and to construct a narrative of the decision-making process. In addition, I categorized the authors or speakers represented in these coded items (the “actors”), and assigned them to the key decision points already outlined in the timeline. I then conducted a thematic analysis of the material from the documents, looking for continuities and discontinuities in themes, the valence of comments, and the actors involved, as they occurred over time.

Data coding and data reduction. The primary codes used in these analyses were as follows:

Content: Twelve content codes emerged from the data. They include: socio-economic status (SES) balance, upper school system/potential school configuration models, roll out/implementation, geography, cohort size/expanded opportunities, protecting individual programs, leadership structure, teacher collaboration, educational outcomes/achievement gap, timeline of the vote, groupings, and tracking (see Appendix C for fuller explication and examples of these codes). Data reduction efforts yielded three general categories: physical schools, approach to schools, and philosophy (Table 1 shows which of the initial 12 content codes are included in which of the three more general content categories). *Physical schools* includes all content related to the physical structure of upper schools in Cambridge, and the more granular codes of geography, groupings of elementary feeder schools, roll out, and cohort size. *Approach*

to Schools includes the two main strategies put forth to address issues of inequities in the current system as represented by the granular codes of upper school system and protecting individual programs. *Philosophy* includes comments about educational belief systems. This encompasses the granular codes of SES balance, educational outcomes/ achievement gap, cohort size, and teacher collaboration. Cohort size is represented in two categories, physical schools and philosophy. This overlap is because cohort size is an integral part of designing physical school facilities but is also commonly spoken about as a philosophical approach to educating adolescents in a developmentally appropriate way.

Intensity of interest: This was calculated by the number of times a content issue was raised.

Valence: The valence with which content areas were talked about was determined to be positive, negative, or neutral. A comment was said to have positive valence if the speaker proposed that the Innovation Agenda would have a positive impact on the content area being discussed (ex. the Innovation Agenda will improve the SES balance in the CPSD). A comment was said to have negative valence if the speaker proposed that the Innovation Agenda would have a negative impact on the content area (for example, schools will become more imbalanced by SES if the Innovation Agenda is implemented). Neutral statements were questions or requests for clarification about a topic. They did not involve a statement of opinion.

Constituency: These groups represented the main actors in this narrative. Four main IA *stakeholder groups* emerged – school district staff; School Committee members; families; and teachers.

Time point: Data were organized according to a timeline of consequential decisions that were made regarding the development of the Innovation Agenda from January 2011 to April

2011. Events and key decision points included in the timeline were determined based on an interview with Lori Likis (CPO). Data were also organized into comments that were made before and after the revisions to the Innovation Agenda were presented on March 8th 2011.

Continuity of interest: This was calculated by the number of time points at which an issue was considered salient.

Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups. Key informant interviews and focus groups were implemented to triangulate data on the key points raised in the document review. Interview protocols were designed to provide a more in depth understanding of findings from the document review. Recurring themes from interviews and focus groups are used to support key findings and to construct a narrative of how the Innovation Agenda was developed. Information from interviews and focus groups was also used to construct the history of middle grades education reform in Cambridge (see Chapter 4).

Policy Framework Analysis

Finally, Kingdon's multiple streams framework was used as an organizing analytic structure. Laying this analytic framework over the temporal structure and content analysis described above revealed how the three streams of policy-making identified by Kingdon ran through the process of forming the policy.

To understand how the specifics of the Innovation Agenda were developed, it is helpful to consider how the policy agenda was set. Several policy theorists have created frameworks to examine how policies are developed and implemented. For example, Stone offers a framework that unpacks how policies arise from a combination of rational thinking during policy-making and emotion determined politics (Stone, 2002). Rogers is more focused on how innovations are diffused throughout a system. He classifies the degree to which units are willing to innovate into

four categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, and laggards, and considers the decision-making process an entity takes when determining whether to adopt an innovation (Rogers, 2003). Weiss takes another approach to understanding how policy is shaped. She focuses on the role of research in shaping policy, and determines that although information can be critical, decision-makers' ideology and interests also have a great impact on policy (Weiss, 1983). Each of these frameworks takes a different approach to documenting the elements that are involved in policy-making, and is useful for the student of policies. However, I have selected a fourth framework, Kingdon's multiple streams framework, as the best one to apply to the Innovation Agenda.

Kingdon's multiple streams framework. Kingdon begins by describing public policy-making as a set of processes, including 1) setting the agenda, 2) the specification of alternatives, 3) a choice between the available alternatives, and 4) the implementation of the chosen policy (Kingdon, 1995, p. 3). Focusing on setting the agenda, Kingdon defines it as "the list of subjects or problems to which government officials are paying some serious attention at any given time" (Kingdon, 1995, p. 3). His "multiple streams" policy framework picks up, then, provides insight into why the policy agenda consist of what it does and how it changes over time. Kingdon identifies three processes that contribute to the shaping of the agenda: problems, policies, and politics (Kingdon, 1995).

Problems. Central to Kingdon's framework is a careful consideration of how problems come to the attention of policy-makers. Kingdon notes that often this occurs because an indicator reveals that there is a particularly acute problem affecting relevant constituencies. This can either be because the magnitude of the problem is too large to ignore, because there has been a dramatic change in the status of the condition or because of a focusing event such as a crisis or

disaster. In these instances, political actors are compelled to act in response. A problem can also come to light when there is a mismatch between a community's stated values and observed conditions or when people perceive themselves to be at a relative disadvantage to others.

Problems can also be defined based on their categorization; people will see a problem differently if it is put in one category or another (Kingdon, 1995).

Policies. Kingdon states all policies build on what came before, and involve a combination of actors and resources (Kingdon, 1995). He explains that public policy ideas progress through mutations and recombinations driven by the actors in and surrounding the government. Problems, issues, and solutions are generated and haphazard combinations are formed based on circumstances at any given time. To survive to be added to the policy agenda ideas must be technically feasible, specialists must believe they are moving in the "right" policy direction and will be able to advance further down the line, and that they must be compatible with the values of the community. As these ideas move through the policy community they begin to gain momentum and receive more political support. Kingdon also adds that policy proposals must be accompanied by viable alternatives so that they can be judged in comparison to other options (Kingdon, 1995).

Politics. The final stream is politics. This stream includes the public mood, campaigns, election results, the ideology of elected bodies, and changes in administration (Kingdon, 1995). The political stream can help an idea build momentum or can inhibit its development depending on these factors. For example, the national mood creates a fertile ground for some items to take root on the policy agenda but policy-makers' sense of the national mood can serve as a constraint, pushing some agenda items to the side. Politicians' perceptions of support and opposition to ideas depends in part on the flow of communication including which side is louder

and which side includes more “important” people (Kingdon, 1995). Importantly, Kingdon recognizes that consensus is built in the political stream by bargaining. In this way coalitions of political actors reach compromises on the actual agenda items so that all of their needs are met (Kingdon, 1995).

Policy windows and policy entrepreneurs. Each of these streams develops independently, but they are joined at critical moments. Within each of these streams many policy ideas are “floating around,” as specialists make suggestions, recombine old ideas, and strategize with one another. When the policy streams cross, problems are linked with solutions, and favorable political will builds behind them. As a result, the greatest policy changes occur when the three streams are joined (Kingdon, 1995). This coupling of issues to solutions with political will is most likely to occur when “policy windows” – another useful concept – are opened. Policy windows are moments in time, when the three streams of problems, policies, and politics combine to create a unique opportunity for changes in policy to occur. This timing is key to whether a policy will be successfully added to the agenda. Kingdon argues that windows are opened either by the emergence of compelling problems or by changes in the political stream (Kingdon, 1995).

Kingdon also identifies policy entrepreneurs: advocates for proposals who are willing to invest their time and resources to promote a position (Kingdon, 1995). Entrepreneurs play an essential role in pushing for change and taking advantage of opportunities. They soften up the system to get it ready for change so that when a policy window opens they can take full advantage (Kingdon, 1995). They also hook up the previously unconnected streams of problems, policies, and politics. Windows open infrequently and briefly so policy entrepreneurs must be ready to take advantage when they occur (Kingdon, 1995).

This framework can be profitably applied to the Innovation Agenda in Cambridge. As mentioned above, the original Innovation Agenda proposed the reorganization of the CPS district to include 11 elementary schools serving Junior Kindergarten to 5th grade students, three two-way language immersion programs, an upper school network of four middle schools serving students in grades 6-8, and one high school with four learning communities, a school of technical arts, and a high school extension program. The creation of four separate middle schools represents a dramatic change from the status quo of JK-8 education to a middle school model. By reorganizing the district and redeveloping the middle school curriculum, Cambridge Public Schools is directly addressing longstanding challenges faced in the middle school grades and reported inequities between the elementary schools. Recent internal studies of the middle school grades, and anecdotal evidence show that these are not new problems, but until now, they have not received concerted attention (Cambridge Public Schools, 2008). Kingdon's multiple streams framework provides a structure to consider why these issues have been added to the policy agenda now and why the particular solutions to these problems, as outlined in the Innovation Agenda, have been shaped as they have.

Prior uses of multiple stream framework

Several studies have used Kingdon's multiple streams framework to examine how education policy agendas were set at the state level (see, for example, Stout & Stevens, 2000; Young, Shepley, Miskel, & Song, 2010). Stout and Stevens (2000) investigated how the Diversity Rule in Minnesota was redesigned after a period of non-compliance. In this instance, Kingdon's framework helped to shed light on how a solution originally developed for one problem came to be attached to another problem and on the power struggle between stakeholders in the political stream (Stout & Stevens, 2000). Young et al. (2010) used the multiple streams

framework to analyze how reading intervention programs were developed in several states. The authors determined that governors acted as policy entrepreneurs, creating and taking advantage of policy windows (Young, Shepley, Miskel, & Song, 2010). In both of these instances the framework needed some slight modification to fit the specific issues and contexts under review. Kingdon's multiple streams framework has also been used to analyze policy shifts in education policy at the local level. Liberman (2002) employed the framework to understand what prompted the restructuring of the governance structure of the Chicago Public Schools. The authors determined that re-conceptualizing the learning gap from a condition into a problem and gathering political will from the republican dominated government prompted the change. The authors of these studies found Kingdon's multiple policy streams framework to be robust and a useful structure to unpack the complexities of a policy agenda.

The following chapter gives a brief history of education reform in the middle grades in Cambridge with a specific focus on the Innovation Agenda as seen through the lens of Kingdon's multiple streams framework.

Chapter 4: History of the Initiative

This chapter presents a recent history of middle grade education in Cambridge based on three interviews with Superintendent Young, Chief Planning Office Lori Likis, and Councillor Maher. Their accounts are supported by relevant documents dated from 2007-2010 (see Appendix A). This history provides the background and context necessary to frame the agenda setting process from January to April 2011 that led to the Innovation Agenda, discussed in detail in the next chapter.

According to Superintendent Young, the quality of education in the middle school grades in Cambridge has been an issue of concern for a long time. The inequities in the middle grades have been a topic of conversation in the community and on the School Committee for the past 40 years (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). However, in the past decade there have been several direct attempts to improve the middle school experience in Cambridge.

In 2007 Superintendent Fowler-Finn created the Middle School Task Force. This group was comprised of educators who met to identify key challenges in the middle grades. The work of the task force was limited to the scope of the JK-8 structure and the configuration of schools that currently existed. The task force determined five key principles for education in the middle grades:

1. Provide curriculum that is rigorous with high expectations for all students; developmentally responsive and relevant to students' lives; integrated and exploratory; based on MA Curriculum Frameworks and CPS Learning Expectations; consistent across the schools; guided by clearly articulated student proficiencies; driven by assessment.

2. Use research-based instructional practices designed to prepare all students to achieve high standards.
3. Staff the middle grades with teachers who are expert in adolescent development, academic content, and best teaching practices, and are committed to knowing the whole child. Support teachers through the development of professional communities in which they work collaboratively toward student achievement and growth.
4. Provide a safe and respectful school environment, free from bullying, in which healthy relationships and communication are fostered in order to improve academic performance and develop caring and competent citizens.
5. Work in partnership with families and communities to support student learning and development (Cambridge Public Schools, 2008).

Next, the Blue Ribbon Commission was formed in response to parent concerns about academic rigor, students demonstrating varying degrees of preparedness entering the high school, behavior issues, lack of extracurricular opportunities, lack of diversity in several of the middle schools, and teacher isolation. This group was a joint project between the School Committee and Superintendent Fowler-Finn and was comprised of School Committee members, school administrators, curriculum leaders, principals, assistant principals, and teachers. The Commission's goal was to research the issues and educate the School Committee and the public on the strengths and challenges of current middle schools in Cambridge and to further research the issue of structure. This involved visiting and researching middle schools within CPS and in surrounding communities to gain an understanding of how programs were impacted by school structure (JK-8, 7-12, or 6-8).

The investigation culminated with the publication of a report and presentation to the School Committee in June 2008 (Cambridge Public Schools, 2008). Key conclusions from the Commission were that there has been a fragmented approach to middle school education in Cambridge with some programs being very successful and popular while others were not. The Commission found that the JK-8 structure of CPS presents both strengths and challenges and advised that Superintendent Fowler-Finn develop specific recommendations on the structure of middle schools. The recommendations included a number of options for consideration: keeping the current JK-8 structure, creating a 6-12 model, or creating a hybrid model that may consist of a combination of options. The Commission recommended that Superintendent Fowler-Finn present these recommendations to the School Committee by December 2008.

In the fall of 2008 Superintendent Fowler-Finn stepped down and Deputy Superintendent Turk took over as Interim Superintendent (L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013). As part of developing the proposal recommended by the School Committee and Blue Ribbon Commission, Interim Superintendent Turk conducted a public process to solicit input from families, administrators, and teachers (L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

In July of 2009 Dr. Jeffrey Young was appointed superintendent of CPS. He was immediately charged with investigating the challenges in the middle grades and coming up with a plan to address them within 100 days (L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). Superintendent Young asked for more time to fully investigate the situation and in November 2009 he presented a report to the School Committee on the middle school grades in Cambridge. The report dealt with enrollment and demographic data in the existing JK-8 program. Some key findings related to the distribution of

free and reduced lunch students across the district and across programs, and geographic distribution of students in relation to the school they attend (Young, 2009).

In the district overall, the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch (45%) and the percentage of students who pay for lunch (55%) had remained relatively consistent from 2007-2009. However the ratio across all JK-5 grades was 43% free and reduced lunch and 57% paid lunch, whereas across all 6-8 grades it was 50% free and reduced lunch and 50% paid lunch. Also, the ratio of free and reduced lunch students to paid lunch students varied widely from school to school in the middle grades. In addition, The Intensive Studies Program included considerably fewer students who received free and reduced lunch: a ratio of 27% free and reduced lunch students to 73% paid lunch students compared to the district-wide ratio of 50% free and reduced lunch and 50% paid lunch. The superintendent's study also found that some schools drew students from across the city (for example, Graham & Parks and King Open) while others served as neighborhood schools, drawing students from a much smaller geographic area (for example, Fletcher Maynard Academy and Haggerty) (Young, 2009). These findings suggested that there were inequities in the existing system both in terms of how students are distributed across schools and in terms of how desirable some schools are compared to others.

Once Superintendent Young had examined the realities of middle grades education in Cambridge he turned his attention to addressing the problem. In December of 2009 Superintendent Young gave a presentation to the School Committee framing the middle school debate. The presentation focused on identifying best practices in middle grades education and reviewing several case studies of high-performing New York middle schools (Young, 2009). On February 2, 2010, Superintendent Young presented his Recommendations on Middle Grades Education to the School Committee. This presentation laid out the process undertaken up to this

point, the problem of middle grades education in Cambridge, the assets of the existing JK-8 system, examined several comparison districts in the area, discussed the developmental needs of children aged 11-14, laid out several options for the district moving forwards, and presented Superintendent Young's recommendation for how to progress from here (Young, 2010).

Superintendent Young defined the problem as an issue of student achievement, student experience, teacher experience, parent perceptions, and a question of equity vs. excellence. He presented data to show persistent achievement gaps between subgroups in Cambridge and wide variations in academic performance by individual school (Young, 2010). He also talked about student experience in terms of cohort size, and discussed comparison schools with fewer than 400 students in the middle grades. At the conclusion of the presentation, Superintendent Young laid out five options for the middle grades moving forward:

1. No change – JK-8's remain as they are;
2. All K-5 with 1 or 2 middle schools;
3. Some JK-8, some JK-5, and 1 middle school;
4. Sister schools arrangement with JK-5's feeding into JK-8's;
5. Keep some JK-8's and close some schools.

Superintendent Young recommended that middle schools leverage the strength of the JK-8 model while addressing some of the deficiencies in the existing system by adopting a "hybrid model" (Option #3). He argued that this would allow for academic challenge for all students, increased access to arts and world language, improvements for special education, enable students to successfully transition to the high school, create professional learning communities for all teachers, create economies of scale across all schools, and allow for robust after school programs.

The School Committee responded with a motion for the Superintendent to further pursue Option #3, the hybrid model, but voiced some concerns, primarily about how the new middle school would fit into the existing district structure. Committee members asked whether the hybrid model might unintentionally create a two-tiered system between JK-8's and the stand alone middle school, or whether the middle school might become a magnet school. There were also comments about whether it was necessary to change systems or if improvement could be accomplished within the existing JK-8 system. There were many comments about choice, and how the controlled choice policy would work within the hybrid configuration. There were also concerns voiced about the process. School Committee members were clear that all school communities need to be involved in any decision-making process and that the superintendent must solicit additional input from the community. Many School Committee members asked for more specific details of the plan.

Superintendent Young then engaged in a public process around the hybrid model, gathering input from school councils, principals, and community members. It quickly became clear that most of the community did not support the proposal (L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). Common sentiments that came up in this process were that there was a tension in the community between improving within the current model (JK-8) and improving by changing the model (School Committee Meeting, 2010). People who were pleased with their schools wanted to keep them and these communities were the most vocal. There were also concerns raised about the details of the plan and how it would be implemented. In addition, many community members raised concerns about the process that led to the hybrid model (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

There was a sense that Superintendent Young was new to the district and had designed the recommendations without an inclusive community process.

In response to the feedback on the hybrid model the School Committee decided to engage in a community feedback process. This involved Superintendent Young going back into the community for more input. In addition during the summer of 2010 the School Committee established three teams to investigate key elements of the middle grades challenges. The teams were JK-8th Educational Structure, Controlled Choice, and Facilities. School Committee members were co-chairs and the teams also included community members and experts in certain fields, parents, and educators. The three teams were each responsible for drafting final reports and presenting their conclusions to the superintendent. The superintendent's cabinet worked with ideas from the task forces' reports to create the draft of IA that was presented in February of 2011 (L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

Despite the attention given to the reported inadequacies of middle school education in Cambridge over many years, little action had been taken to improve it. In the past few years, a new focus has been brought to the issue and substantial changes have been proposed, developed, and implemented. Superintendent Young's initial recommendations and The Innovation Agenda mark the first concrete structural changes proposed to address the challenges of the middle grades in Cambridge.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter I examine the development of the Innovation Agenda based on extensive document review, key informant interviews, and focus groups. First I present the general salience of content areas discussed over time, and how that focus changed over time. Then I describe general participation of constituent groups across key points in the process. Next I discuss key consistencies and changes in how these groups discussed content over time. After that, I describe the overall valence of discussions over time, and then attach valence to particular content areas. This helps to highlight the changes that occurred over time that, in part, enabled the IA to move forward.

In the second level of analysis, I apply the Kingdon multiple streams framework – problems, policies, and politics – to understand the relative weight, or influences particular constituent groups wielded. Kingdon’s use of the term “stream” is instructive and useful as well, since it suggests the critical role that timing plays in arriving at policy decisions.

Content

A wide range of content was discussed over the course of the Innovation Agenda decision-making process, including, the potential configuring of an upper school system, where schools would be physically located, and protecting individual programs (see Appendix C). It was clear that *protecting individual programs* was a particularly hot topic across time periods. At each time point after the initial presentation of the Innovation Agenda on February 1, 2011, this content area was mentioned more than any other (Figure 1). Aside from this obvious spike, the wide variety of different topics discussed made it difficult to see many patterns in the data. To be able to look at patterns in content discussed across time points I collapsed the twelve granular

content areas into three general categories: physical schools, approach to schools, and philosophy (Table 1; see Chapter 3).

The topics discussed varied greatly from one point in time to another (Figure 2). There were no noticeable trends in how the content areas discussed changed over time. In one focus group a parent explained this variety saying that different topics came up at different points in time serendipitously; a parent or School Committee member would make a comment during a meeting and spark a debate on that subject (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013).

Discussion of content areas before and after revision to the Innovation Agenda. The Innovation Agenda decision-making process spanned from February 1, 2011 when the original agenda was presented, to March 15, 2011 when the revised agenda was adopted. Importantly, on March 8, 2011 the superintendent presented a revised version of the Innovation Agenda, which involved substantial changes to the original plan. One revision was to place an upper school campus in the Cambridgeport/Riverside neighborhood rather than locating two campuses in East Cambridge. As a result of this change, the King, Morse, and Kennedy-Longfellow elementary schools feed into the Putnam Avenue campus. Another revision was to preserve JK-8 immersion opportunities for students in the Amigos two-way immersion school and for students in the Ola program. To facilitate this, the revised IA proposed that the Amigos program move to its own building at Upton Street and the Ola program remain JK-8 at the Cambridge street building. Superintendent Young also proposed to leave the Tobin Montessori and the Graham and Parks JK-5 schools at their current location (rather than swapping), with upper school students from both schools feeding into the Vassal Lane campus (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011; Table 3). See Appendix D for details about the demographic breakdown of students attending each of the upper school campuses, before and after the revision.

In addition to the changes outlined above, *The Innovation Agenda: Revisions and Clarifications* (2011) provides clarification on several points. Superintendent Young gave examples of best practices to be explored as options for the upper school program including some popular programs implemented in existing JK-8 schools. The document also explains that upper school campuses will have a level of autonomy that will support the common goals of the upper school network while still allowing them to develop their own vision, mission, educational philosophy, and daily schedule. Finally, in the document Superintendent Young clarifies that the Innovation Agenda is designed to not only eliminate achievement gaps but to improve the academic and social experience for all students. He states that by providing equal access to high quality programs, opportunities, and diverse larger cohorts in the middle grades the IA will improve the experience of students facing achievement gaps in the current structure (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011).

The changes and clarifications presented to the School Committee on March 8, 2011 represent a significant rethinking of some elements of the original policy. Considering changes in content being discussed before and after the revision of the Innovation Agenda on March 8, 2011 provides some insight into what motivated the district staff to make the changes they did and how the public reacted to those changes. *The Innovation Agenda: Revisions and Clarifications* (2011) document explicitly states that, “ The questioning, suggestions, concerns, and support of the Cambridge community have positively impacted the district’s thinking and the design of the Innovation Agenda. With the community’s feedback at the forefront, Superintendent Young and his leadership team have revisited, further defined, and revised the framework for the Innovation Agenda as described in this document” (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011, p. 2).

This statement is borne out in the data gathered from the documents I analyzed. Prior to the revision, parents most frequently discussed issues contained in the “approach to schools” category (Figure 4). This encompassed heated discussion about protecting individual programs, the “pros” and “cons” of a middle school versus a JK-8 model, and the fate of the language immersion programs in the new structure. For example, one parent spoke at a School Committee meeting saying:

At the King Open the plan would eliminate the 5th and 6th grade humanities curriculum where the students work together in a 5/6 classroom that would no longer exist... it would also remove Ola from the King Open... One size does not fit all. Some communities see mostly benefits from this plan and for them it could be implemented mostly as is. For others please take the time needed to not only have meetings, but actually make changes to the design. A K-6 model at some schools, 7/8 mixed grade humanities, keeping K-8 continuity in some programs, and yes maybe keeping some schools K-8 (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011).

Issues contained in the “physical schools” category were the next frequently discussed. This conversation focused on the geographic locations of proposed upper schools and the elementary feeder patterns. For example, one parent made a statement to the School Committee saying, “We have a concern about the locations of these upper schools. There are a significant number of children who live in the Cambridgeport/Riverside part of the city... this will cause the rest of our students to move out of our neighborhood to other parts of the city. This will create no K-8 option in the Cambridgeport/Riverside area, which will impact after school programming and will also require additional busing” (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011). The fact that the revisions to the Innovation Agenda put forth on March 8, 2011 focused on

protecting language immersion programs and changing the geographical location of school communities implies that the revision was in fact a response to community concerns.

In several areas families seem to have responded to the revisions made to the Innovation Agenda. We see a decrease in the percentage of comments made by families about issues included in the “physical schools” and “approach to schools” categories after the revision (Figure 4). It is possible that the decrease in comments after the revised version was presented indicates a change in families’ attitude towards the Innovation Agenda, at least in these content areas. The fact that the change is less dramatic for issues included in the “physical schools” category is mostly explained by complaints from families about the SES balance of the new Putnam Avenue campus. As a result of the change in feeder patterns proposed in the revised Innovation Agenda the Kennedy-Long Fellow, Martin Luther King, and Morse schools feed into the same upper school. These three elementary schools have sizable low income student populations and as a result the Putnam Avenue Upper School is the middle school with the greatest percentage of students who receive free and reduced lunch (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013; see Appendix D).

In addition, there is some speculation from teachers that the change in location and feeder patterns to the Putnam Avenue Upper School was also driven in part by parents from the Baldwin school who did not want to be paired with families from the Martin Luther King school as would have been the case in the original proposal (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013; Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). If this was the case then one would expect the Baldwin families who are no longer feeding into an upper school campus with the MLK school community to be pleased with the change and therefore less vocal, whereas one would expect the MLK families to be displeased and therefore continue to be vocal. The result would be the small change in the

number of comments made about issues in the “physical schools” category we see in Figure 4. In this instance, the revisions pleased some school communities who had previously been unhappy with the plan while displeasing others who perceived themselves to be negatively impacted by the changes.

Interestingly, there was a marked increase in the number of comments made about issues included in the “philosophy” category after the revision. The increased level of discussion about SES balance due to the change in feeder patterns to the Putnam Avenue Upper School can explain some of this spike. It is also possible that the increase in comments about philosophy represents a strategic change in how families were voicing opinions about the Innovation Agenda. Perhaps people chose to reframe their thoughts about the IA in terms of the achievement gap and SES balance.

A third option is that different parents were speaking at different points in time. Superintendent Young stated that from his perspective people did not change their minds or approaches much over the course of the IA decision-making process. He said, “People who understood that there was something wrong here heard my voice and thought, ‘Ah, he’s articulated what’s wrong here and we have to do something about it.’ Some people refused to believe something was wrong, would not believe it. And so they heard my voice as fingernails on the blackboard. It was a terrible painful sound to them because I was challenging these icons they had for many years and they just didn’t want to hear it... (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).” According to this argument the shift in the number of comments about philosophy would be due to a change in which families were speaking at public comment at different points in time. Any of these three options are possible explanations.

Constituent participation

I included four constituent groups in my analysis: district staff, School Committee members, families, and teachers (see Chapter 3).

District staff. The Cambridge Public School District is led by Superintendent Jeffrey Young. In 2011, his cabinet was Deputy Superintendent Carolyn Turk, the Executive Director of Human Resources, the Executive Director and Director of Student Achievement, the Chief Operating Office, the Chief Financial Office, the Chief Planning Officer, the Legal Counsel, and the Executive Director of Special Education. The voice of district staff was represented in presentations to the School Committee, School Committee round Tables, and official district publications (Appendix A). Most often Superintendent Young represented the district but other cabinet members did speak on occasion. District staff is the only constituent group represented in the first two time periods as the district first introduces the Innovation Agenda (Figure 4).

School Committee. Cambridge has a School Committee of six elected officials and the mayor who serves as chair. The School Committee appoints the superintendent and determines school department policy and budget (Cambridge Public Schools, 2013). School Committee members are represented more in the documents in the latter portion of the decision-making process. As we move closer to the vote, School Committee members more frequently voice their support and concerns about the policy (Figure 5).

Families. Families were the most vocal group in this sample (Figure 5). This is in large part due to the types of documents included (Appendix B). It is important to note that the families discussed here are not a homogenous group. Families from different school communities had a wide range of concerns and comments on the Innovation Agenda. Graham and Parks, Amigos, King Open (including the Ola program), Tobin Montessori, Kennedy

Longfellow, and Morse were the school communities most represented in School Committee public comment sessions (Figure 6).

Some school communities were conspicuously absent from the documents included in this analysis. For example, only one family member associated with the Fletcher Maynard Academy spoke during public comment for any School Committee meetings (Figure 6). Cambridgeport, Haggarty, and Peabody were also poorly represented (Figure 6). The school communities represented in the decision-making process also changed over time. At the beginning of the process Amigos was by far the most vocal school community at public comment, followed by the Tobin (Figure 6). Towards the end Graham and Parks surpassed all other school communities as the most vocal, followed closely by the King Open (Figure 6).

Teachers. The teachers constituent group includes teachers and principals at the existing twelve JK-8 elementary schools and high school in Cambridge. When looking at the documents, teachers were relatively quiet throughout the process (Figure 6).

Content Addressed by Constituent Groups over Time

These constituent groups play different roles in the process of shaping the Innovation Agenda. Considering which stakeholders are engaged at different points in the process and how they spoke about different content areas sheds light on the development of the policy.

District staff. The first two time periods, January 24 – 29, 2011 and February 1, 2011 include the superintendent's cabinet's preparation for the initial presentation of the Innovation Agenda to the School Committee and the presentation itself (Appendix B). In these documents district staff focused on philosophy (Figure 1 and 2). For example, in his initial presentation of the IA to the School Committee on February 1, 2011 Superintendent Young says, "The big theme is higher expectations across the board. We are committed to lifting the expectations for

our students and our teachers. We want you to expect more of us as a district. CPS is an organization that is going to educate ALL students” (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011). On March 8, 2011 when the superintendent presented the revised Innovation Agenda the topic he talked about most was physical schools (Figures 2 and 4). For example he says, “We have gone very carefully through the staffing and budget. Three of the four campuses would be enrolling only 75 – 80 students per grade. This is more in keeping with recommendations of School Committee JK-8 working team” (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011). This represents a shift in focus from talking about big ideas to talking about specifics. It could also be a response to community and School Committee concerns.

School Committee members. On all three general content categories the School Committee was much more vocal towards the end of the process than in the beginning. In fact Committee members did not say anything for the first four meetings in the documents included (Figure 5). This is likely related to the nature of the meetings. Earlier in the process meetings are focused on public comment and School Committee members are listening to their constituents. Later, they give position statements and ask questions of the superintendent (Appendix A). School Committee members speak most about issues contained in the “physical schools” category from March 1- March 5, 2011. On March 8 during the round table where the revisions are presented comments are still mostly issues pertaining to physical schools. However, in the final time period, March 11- March 15, 2011 which includes the School Committee’s vote on the Innovation Agenda, the content area they discuss the most is philosophy. This trend gives insight into the language used at different points in the decision-making process. When the School Committee members are forming their opinions and responding to community concerns there is a

heavy focus on issues related to physical schools; the details of how the policy will unfold.

However, when the School Committee ultimately votes to adopt the Innovation Agenda the language they use centers on philosophy; their belief systems about why this policy is the way the district should move forward. For example, one School Committee member, Marc McGovern states:

I can't say whether or not this plan will close the achievement gap... But long before the words achievement gap ever entered into our vocabulary we had an equally disturbing problem in Cambridge that I believe this plan will resolve. For far too long students in the Cambridge Public Schools have been inequitably prepared for high school. Today if you are lucky enough, and it is luck, through controlled choice to get into a certain school then your child receives a stellar education and goes of to CRLS well prepared. If your lottery number is not called then your child goes off to high school lacking many of the academic and social experiences obtained by his/her peers. It sickens me that teachers of CRLS can tell which school a child attended just by how they were or were not prepared. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

Families. Initially families were most concerned about issues contained in the “approach to schools” category. By the end of the process philosophy emerged as the most talked about content area with approach to schools remaining prominent (Figure 4).

Mentions by constituent group follows a pattern of waves within each general content category: first there is a spike in families' comments, then the next time period there is a spike in School Committee member's comments, then in the next time period there is a spike in district staff comments. These spikes decrease in magnitude each time (Figure 5, 7, 8 & 9). This pattern implies that within the confines of the Innovation Agenda as set by the superintendent, families

are driving the conversation. School Committee members seem to follow the cues of their constituents and the district seems to respond to both of these groups.

Valence Attached to Content, over Time

In addition to coding the frequency that constituent groups mentioned content areas I also considered the valence with which these content areas were talked about. I assigned each comment a valence: positive, negative, and neutral (see Chapter 3). Considering how the valence of comments changed over time in relation to constituent groups and content areas reveals how opinions about the IA shifted over the course of February and March 2011. For the purpose of this analysis I report only changes in valence of families' comments over time. Families were by far the most vocal group in my sample and also showed the most variation in valence. As a result of this choice, the findings below tell an interesting story about how families' views on the Innovation Agenda changed over time but do not touch on the School Committee, district staff, or teachers' opinions.

Physical schools. There was a change in the valence of families' comments when talking about the IA over time by content area. At the start of the process issues included in the "physical schools" category were very contentious areas of discussion. Many parents spoke out strongly against the proposed changes to school locations, feeder patterns, cohort size, and roll out.

As mentioned above, the revisions proposed by Dr. Young on March 8, 2011 dealt specifically with issues in the "physical schools" category. The superintendent relocated one of the upper school campuses, two elementary schools, the Tobin and the Graham and Parks, and moved the JK-8 Amigos program to its own building. The superintendent also rearranged the

elementary feeder patters to several upper schools (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011). To see whether the changes proposed in the revision had an impact on families' opinions I analyzed the valence of families' comments about physical schools before and after March 8, 2011. The percent of negative comments made by families about issues included in the physical schools category decreased from 71% of total comments before the March 8, 2011 revision to 50% of total comments after the revision (Figure 9). The percent of positive comments made by families about physical schools increased from 14% of total comments before the revision to 36% of total comments after the revision (Figure 9). This change indicates that the revision may have mollified some constituents' concerns about geography, feeder patterns, cohort size, and roll out. This idea is supported by the superintendent's comments that the Morse school community made a strong case for locating an upper school campus in the Riverside neighborhood (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

Approach to schools. Issues contained in the "approach to schools" category were the most negatively discussed content area in the first half of the Innovation Agenda decision-making process with almost 90% of total comments having negative valence (Figure 11). Comments about approach to schools centered on the fundamental approach of the Innovation Agenda: to make changes within the existing JK-8 structure, such as expanding/replicating successful programs and focusing resources on struggling schools, or to create a new middle school structure that would impact all school communities equally. Many families were strongly opposed to opening new middle schools and/or to ending JK-8 programs at the fifth grade.

The revisions to the IA included some changes to the district's approach to middle grade education in Cambridge. Specifically, the revisions preserved JK-8 immersion opportunities for students in the Amigos two-way immersion school and for students in the Ola program at the

King Open elementary school. The new feeder patterns also allowed the JK-5 Tobin Montessori program to remain at Vassal Lane so that students would stay in the same building when they transitioned from the elementary school to upper school. The clarifications included in the document spoke directly to the amount of autonomy each upper school would have and to examples of programs currently operating in the district that would be preserved in the new upper schools.

To see whether the changes proposed in the revision appear related to families' opinions, I analyzed the valence of families' comments about issues in the "approach to schools" category before and after March 8, 2011. The percentage of negative comments made by families about approach to schools decreased from 86% of total comments before the revision to 68% of total comments after the revision. The percentage of positive comments made by families about approach to schools increased from 3% before the revision to 28% after the revision (Figure 11). Of the three general categories included in this study, the "approach to schools" category shows the greatest percentage gain in positive comments over time. This jump suggests that despite the fact that the revisions to the IA did not accommodate all school communities, they had enough influence on public opinion that the overall tenor of the conversation swung dramatically from almost entirely negative to two-thirds negative and one-third positive (Figure 7).

Philosophy. Of all of the general content categories, philosophy is the most consistent over time, in that the percentage of comments made about issues in this category did not vary much across time points. The highest percentage of positive comments was made about issues in the "philosophy" category from the beginning to the end of the process. For example, one parent spoke at a School Committee meeting saying:

For me the integration goes beyond balancing of students by SES and other characteristics. Our present system with 12 differentiated K-8s imposes real barriers in my mind to educating all our children. These barriers exist even when two programs exist in the same building. We emphasize difference too much in this system rather than the common goal of preparing our kids for high school and beyond. We emphasize what makes us special rather than emphasizing how we as adults are responsible for ensuring that all our kids in all schools have the experience of recognizing where their gifts lie and how to develop them. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

The percentage of negative comments made by families about issues in the “philosophy” category decreased marginally from 42% before the revision to 37% after the revision. The percentage of positive comments made by families about philosophy also increased marginally, from 45% before the revision to 47% after the revision (Figure 12). This may be because the category “philosophy” includes socioeconomic balance, educational achievement, cohort size, and teacher collaboration. There is sound educational research supported by anecdotal evidence from within CPSD supporting each of the district’s claims in these areas.

District staff spoke mostly about issues contained in the “philosophy” category in the first two time periods included in this analysis and successfully framed the discussion around these topics so that it was very difficult for anyone to argue against them. Superintendent Young was uncompromising on these topics throughout the decision-making process saying, “CPS is an organization that is going to educate ALL students. Two guiding principals I’ve talked about since I arrived here a year and a half ago and drive this agenda are academic excellence and social justice” (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011). He was clear from the beginning that his goal was to improve academic outcomes for all students in Cambridge, to

balance the SES and racial disparities between schools, and to provide healthier cohorts for both students and teachers in the middle grades (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011). There was no mention of philosophy in the revision except for a clarification about class sizes in the upper schools. It is therefore not surprising that there was no sizable shift in public opinion after the revision was released. Also, Cambridge is generally a liberal and socially aware city where individuals care about social justice. Given the context of the Cambridge community it is not surprising that few people openly criticized Superintendent Young's attempt to improve academic outcomes for all students and balance the city's schools.

Constituent Activities and Content Valence

Among the patterns I discerned regarding the valence of comments made, the most noteworthy one was related to school community engagement. There were substantial differences in how involved different school communities were in the political process and how these school communities talked about the content areas examined. To understand this, it is important to consider which school communities were active at different points in the process. It is possible that the decrease in negative comments and increase in positive comments about each content area is due to a shift in which school communities were talking at different time points not to a change in opinion within school communities. Figure 5 shows that in the time period before the revision the conversation was dominated by the Amigos school community whereas in the period after the revision the Graham and Parks and King Open school communities were the most vocal (Figure 5). The fact that the Amigos school was so vocal early on and so quiet later in the process implies that they were satisfied with the revisions. The fact that the King Open and Graham and Parks schools' involvement increased over time implies that they were unsatisfied, if not more concerned, with the revisions.

Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework

The data presented earlier in this chapter offer a snapshot of what actually occurred during this period of development of the Innovation Agenda. The Kingdon framework now helps to explain why the process played out as it did. What follows is an attempt to categorize the events that occurred into Kingdon's problem, policy, and politics streams, and to identify policy entrepreneurship, and the influence of timing, in the eventual IA.

Setting the policy agenda. Kingdon defines the policy agenda as “the list of subjects or problems to which government officials are paying some serious attention at any given time” (Kingdon, 1995 p. 3). In the case of the Innovation Agenda in Cambridge, the policy agenda had been set for quite some time. Discussion about the middle grades had been going on for decades, with various commissions tasked with finding a solution. However, none of these efforts resulted in substantial change. When Superintendent Jeffrey Young was hired in July of 2009 the School Committee tasked him with making recommendations about how to address the middle school problem within 100 days (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). Superintendent Young responded that this time period was too short, saying “You’ve been talking about this for 40 years so I’m not going to try to come up with a solution in a few days. I’m going to take my time and find out what’s going on here” (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). With this, Superintendent Young embarked on a process to clearly define the problem, craft a solution, and sell it to the community and the School Committee.

Kingdon posits that the greatest policy changes occur when the three streams of problems, policies, and politics are joined (Kingdon, 1995). In these instances problems are linked with solutions, and favorable political will builds behind them. Here I analyze how the Innovation Agenda was developed and adopted in terms of these three streams.

Problem stream. The problem stream deals with how problems come to the attention of policy-makers. The discussion about middle schools in Cambridge is not new. The problem had had the attention of policy-makers for some time before the Innovation Agenda was developed. The earlier Blue Ribbon Commission was convened as a result of a “growing number of concerns from parents and staff regarding pressing issues with the middle school... concerns about academic rigor, about varying degrees of student preparedness of CRLS from the elementary schools, about behavior, and about the need for additional opportunities for extra-curricular activities, teacher isolation, and the need for coordinated professional development and common planning time” (Cambridge Public Schools, 2008, p. 3). The report goes on to state “The Cambridge Public Schools have undergone many positive changes in the past few years. The successful restructuring of CRLS has revealed the importance of a focus on our middle school programs” (Cambridge Public Schools, 2008, p. 7). These excerpts show that the problem was initially brought to the School Committee’s attention by parents and staff. At this point it was framed as a collection of smaller issues all occurring in the middle grades.

In his multiple streams framework, Kingdon draws a distinction between problems and conditions. He defines conditions as based on values, comparisons, and categories (Kingdon, 1995). A condition can become a problem when there is a mismatch between a community’s stated values and observed conditions that is too large to ignore. This distinction is particularly crucial when thinking about the Innovation Agenda in Cambridge. The Innovation Agenda was developed and adopted in response to a change in how key actors perceived the condition of the middle grades. Although policy-makers had been aware that the existing middle grade education was not preparing all students for high school and the issue was discussed in detail at many

points in time, there was not a sense of urgency to address the problem. The development of the Innovation Agenda marks a dramatic shift towards action.

Kingdon argues that problems can claim a place on the agenda for several reasons: because an indicator reveals that there is a particularly acute problem, because the magnitude of the problem is too large to ignore or because there has been a dramatic change in the status of the condition, or because of a focusing event such as a crisis or disaster (Kingdon, 1995). In July 2009 Dr. Young was hired as superintendent to focus on and address the issues in the middle schools (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013). From this point on he took control of framing the problem. Kingdon stresses that there are great political stakes in how problems are defined, as the definition of the problem has great bearing on the solutions that are proposed to address it (Kingdon, 1995). Early in his superintendency, Superintendent Young used indicators to create a sense of urgency around the problem. In his middle school study he painted a stark picture of the inequities present in the existing middle grades structure (Young, 2009). He shed light on the problem in a way that brings it into direct contradiction with the values of the Cambridge community and makes it very difficult to ignore. One teacher remembered, “We were shown graphs about what was going on, the number of kids leaving the system as they go to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade and I do remember looking at the graph and saying oh my god this really is a problem here. And it wasn’t something I really would have seen just tooling along at the old Graham and Parks, it was when I was giving that information ...” (Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). Superintendent Young created a sense of urgency around the problem of middle grade education in Cambridge using internal data about the school system as well as anecdotal evidence from teachers about rising ninth grade students’ disparate levels of preparation for high school.

In his initial presentation, *Superintendent's Recommendations on Middle Grades Education* (2010), Superintendent Young initially defined the problem in terms of student achievement (achievement gaps), student experience (cohort size/developmentally appropriate education), teacher experience (professional learning communities), parent perceptions, and equity vs. excellence (imbalance in the district) (Young, 2011). This is the first official problem statement that I found in the documents included in this study. This definition of the problem reflects research on adolescent development. As explained in Chapter 2, during adolescence youth expand their social context, opening themselves up to new experiences and ideas that fuel their development (Morris, Eisenberg, & Houlberg, 2011). Schools can provide an opportunity for adolescents to get excited about learning (Elkind, 1967; Salmela-Aro, 2011). Larger cohorts during the middle grades and professional development for teachers focused specifically on this age group, as laid out in the IA, positions schools to engage all students. This framing of the issues in the middle grades sets the stage for the Innovation Agenda.

Superintendent Young created the original IA “with the knowledge that today’s CPS middle grades experience is not what it must be for students and teachers... it was created in response to the reality that today’s eighth grade graduates are not entering our high school equally and consistently well prepared to succeed in, and make the most of, the academic and social opportunities that await them there. It was created to meet the clarion call that we close persistent and pernicious achievement gaps for our city’s children” (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011, p. 1). In short, the problem the IA is designed to address is that students entering the high school are unequally prepared and therefore there are achievement gaps in Cambridge. During his initial presentation to the School Committee Superintendent Young says, “In our schools we have inequitable middle grades experiences for students both academically and socially, that has

to be rectified” (School Committee Meeting, 2011). The community almost universally accepts this definition of the problem and debate focuses on whether the Innovation Agenda is the best solution.

During the decision-making process about the Innovation Agenda the different elements of the larger problem of inequitable middle grade education were discussed. Dr. Young specifically referenced cohort size saying, “Right size cohorts are a means to an end not an end in itself; they are a means to doing the kinds of programs and structure for kids that everybody wants” (School Committee Meeting, 2011). He also spoke about professional communities for teachers saying, “Limited professional learning communities for teachers. In any profession people need to work together to do their best work. And yet in education where teaching is by any means essentially an isolating profession, you go into your classroom for 180 days a year with young people and very little contact with adults. We need to be intentional about creating structures and time and putting our money where our mouth is – if we believe that collaboration is important to improving teachers we need to do that” (School Committee Meeting, 2011).

In this study’s focus groups, participants focused on different elements of the problem when describing the problem the IA was designed to fix. Everyone I spoke with, in focus groups and interviews, agreed that the IA was designed to address inequities in the district, however some focused more on struggles of leadership to address the needs of such a wide range of students in K-8 schools, some discussed the seemingly unshakable reputations of the less chosen schools, some mentioned the challenges of scheduling in a K-8 school, whereas others focused on class size and makeup (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). Based on the focus group meetings and the document analysis it seems that the Innovation

Agenda included so many different elements in the problems statement that most constituents could grab a hold of at least one element they recognized in their own community.

Although most constituents accept Superintendent Young's definition of the problem, there are a few instances where families objected, arguing instead that the problem is an issue of the controlled choice system in the schools and imbalances in neighborhoods across the city:

This plan misdiagnoses the problem, fundamentally. I think this plan not only misdiagnoses the problem but as a result of that also prescribes the wrong solution because it's solving the wrong diagnosis. As a result of that this plan is going to be a waste of public resources.... Cohort size is a symptom it is not the root cause. The root cause is inequality in our community. And this plan will do nothing to address it, absolutely nothing. Cohort size is a reflection of our neighborhoods it is a reflection of our current segregation and we are doing nothing to address the inequality in the early ages. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

I personally really believe that we can build strong middle school programs. We have a lot of ideas about how to do that. I think the big issue in our city is around the controlled choice program and I personally think if we could solve that first some of our other issues may fall into line. Even within the plan I'm very worried that we are reinforcing the problems of imbalance in the city. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

These disagreements are few and far between. As evidenced by the documents, focus groups, and interviews, most people seemed to agree that the problem is inequitable school experiences that led to achievement gaps and students being unprepared for high school.

The policy stream. Once the definition of the problem was crystallized it became easier to craft a policy solution. Kingdon states that it is impossible to find the ultimate origin of a policy idea. All policies build on what came before and involve a combination of actors and resources (Kingdon, 1995). This continuum of decision-making resulting in a policy decision is obvious in the Innovation Agenda. As mentioned in the background section above, the Innovation Agenda is built on many years of thinking, but many of the details of the policy are decided within these several months from January to March 2011.

Kingdon's framework also states that actors drift in and out of the policy stream and in the process, solutions and problems collide (Kingdon, 1995). School Committee members and superintendents have attempted to address the middle grades issues in Cambridge multiple times. The most organized efforts were The Middle School Task Force and the Blue Ribbon Commission (2007, 2008). The Middle School Task Force determined five key principles for middle grades education and the Blue Ribbon Commission concluded with recommendations that the superintendent develop specific recommendations on the structure of middle schools, including a number of options for consideration including but not limited to keeping the current JK-8 structure, creating a 6-12 model, or creating a hybrid model that may consist of a combination of options (Cambridge Public Schools, 2008). However, neither attempt yielded a concrete solution to the problems in the middle grades. In addition, within the community there were different strategies that people thought would help the situation including improving individual programs to make them more desirable to families and addressing the controlled choice system to balance race and class across elementary schools (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; School Committee Meeting, 2011; Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). At the time of the

Innovation Agenda none of these strategies had been implemented successfully enough to address the problems in the middle grades.

The Innovation Agenda is centered on the idea that upper school campuses will create the critical mass to support high quality middle grades experiences for all students, based on their developmental needs (see Chapter 2) (Cambridge Public Schools, 2011; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). This is a more drastic approach to change than any other solution previously mentioned. Superintendent Young stated, “The whole system had to be transformed” (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). Focus groups revealed a sense among families that the district proposed the upper school model because they had tried everything else and this was something that had not been tried (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013).

Despite its drastic nature, the proposal to open four upper school campuses did gain support from the School Committee and community and was eventually adopted. Kingdon’s framework provides some insight into why this happened. Kingdon proposes that public policy ideas progress through mutations and recombinations driven by the actors in and surrounding the government (Kingdon, 1995). Kingdon also argues that to be successful, policies need to be technically feasible and also compatible with the values of the community (Kingdon, 1995). These characteristics of policy development are clearly visible when looking at the development of the Innovation Agenda. The policy was adjusted and readjusted, evolving over time, as it moved through the political process. At each point in time the proposed solutions were tested for both feasibility and for alignment with community values.

To understand how the final version of the Innovation Agenda came to be we must go back to Superintendent Young’s original recommendations for middle grades in Cambridge, made in 2010. In this report, he recommends a hybrid model with some JK-8 schools and some

JK-5 schools feeding into one middle school (Young, 2010). Superintendent Young described this proposal as an attempt to preserve what people liked about the district. Many vocal families wanted to preserve the JK-8 model and the hybrid was a political compromise that spoke to the community's value of choice in schools (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

Although this approach did reflect the community's values, it was not technically feasible. The hybrid model would have preserved some high functioning and chosen programs and dismantled other less successful programs. Which programs would be maintained and which would be dismantled followed race and class lines, such that the white middle class families who came out in support of their schools would not have to experience a change whereas in general lower income minority families who were less engaged in the public process would have to make the adjustment to a middle school model. As a result there were concerns in the district that the middle school would have a much higher population of low income and minority students than the JK-8 schools. This approach would perpetuate the long-standing inequities in Cambridge (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

According to school personnel, there was also a strong negative community reaction to the hybrid model. Some of this, perhaps, was a reaction to the change itself; much of the community was anxious about changing a stable system (L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013; 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). Many families were also concerned about the wisdom of middle schools and how well this approach would work in Cambridge. There were also concerns about the process that led to the hybrid model (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013). Many community members felt that Superintendent Young was new and did not really know the Cambridge

community or their needs and that his recommendations were very top down (L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013; M. Maher, personal communication, 2013). As a result of these factors the hybrid model did not garner support from the School Committee and was eventually abandoned.

Superintendent Young then went back to the drawing board and came up with a new approach, the original Innovation Agenda, presented in February 2011. This plan to create four small upper school campuses spread across the city was technically feasible in that it impacted the whole Cambridge community equally (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; L. Likis, personal communication, January 9, 2013; Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). The proposal itself was framed as a grand vision of social justice and academic excellence. These concepts resonated strongly with the stated values of the Cambridge community (Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013).

Although the original Innovation Agenda was arguably a strong approach for addressing the middle grade problem at the level of the whole Cambridge school district, it put programs that were considered effective and were thriving under the existing system at risk. A parent from one of these communities professed to thinking that his/her school would not be altered under the hybrid proposal because it was attractive and functioning (Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). Under the Innovation Agenda, however, every school would change regardless of whether it was a successful or struggling school. As result of this, many school communities were very vocally against the Innovation Agenda (School Committee Meeting, 2011).

Due to the community's reaction to elements of the original policy proposal the school district staff made several adjustments and released a revised version of the Innovation Agenda in March 2011. Former mayor, David Maher, explained that, "Adjustments were made as we

gathered information. It wasn't that there was a secret plan in the bottom drawer that was what we were planning on doing along. We really did shape things over time" (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013). This is yet another example of the modifications Kingdon refers to as the defining feature of the policy stream (Kingdon, 1995). The policy was tweaked and adjusted to satisfy some of the most vocal constituent groups and stay afloat in the political stream.

Political stream. The final stream in Kingdon's framework is the political stream. This includes the public mood, campaigns, election results, the ideology of elected bodies, and changes in administration (Kingdon, 1995). The political stream can help an idea build momentum or can inhibit its development depending on these factors.

Perhaps the most important factor in the political stream is Dr. Young's appointment as superintendent and David Maher's appointment as mayor. Kingdon states that, "administration changes bring with them marked changes in policy agendas" (Kingdon, 1995 p. 153). It seems that Superintendent Young's hiring brought a fresh perspective and energy to the ongoing discussions about how to approach challenges in the middle grades. As Mayor, David Maher appears to have brought his commitment to education and political know how to bear on the problem. The fact that these two appointments coincided created a unique confluence of both the education and political understanding to the challenges facing CPS (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013). The change in administration was also a concrete demonstration of the School Committee's willingness to pursue change outside of its comfort zone. Finally, it appears that Superintendent Young and former Mayor Maher's leadership also greatly increased the likelihood that a policy such as the Innovation Agenda would be adopted.

Kingdon also points out that the national mood has an impact on policy agendas by either promoting an item on the agenda or hindering it. The national mood can play a role in creating

the “fertile ground” an agenda item needs to grow (Kingdon, 1995). In the case of the Innovation Agenda, the national education reform policy, outlined in the literature review of this paper, most likely impacted the political conditions in Cambridge. Councillor Maher describes Cambridge in the 1990s saying, “As the pendulum swings here we are, this completely decentralized system as the state and country were moving way over here on the opposite side of standardized testing... and yet MCAS and the real push to look at standardized testing came into Cambridge... and shined a light on those deficiencies especially in schools that weren’t doing well. So what you see over the next ten years was the pendulum swing back and we had to become more centralized and we had to develop some more system wide standards and I think the Innovation Agenda helped” (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013).

According to Councillor Maher the Innovation Agenda was designed to provide a more well rounded educational experience for students. That experience needed to include rigor, enrichment opportunities, and overall a more challenging education experience for all students. This is also reflected by the terminology used in the discussion of the Innovation Agenda is consistent with the national education reform movement. Discussion of the achievement gap as shown by state standardized tests is a key component of this movement and of the Innovation Agenda decision-making process. In this way the national mood contributed to the “fertile ground” necessary for the Innovation Agenda to take root.

Kingdon also discusses the role of consensus building in the political stream. He explains that consensus is built through bargaining, and gaining political support by giving stakeholders their pet provisions (Kingdon, 1995). This process can be seen in the case of the Innovation Agenda. First of all, Councillor Maher was clear about the importance of winning community buy in to the plan. He explained that, “We had to be careful about not making it seem like it was

big brother coming in... I don't think I ever cut off a single speaker [at public comment]... I didn't want anyone to say that their interest, or position, or concerns were not heard... I didn't want anyone to say you just jammed this down our throat" (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013). As a result of this inclusive process, Mayor Maher was told by many constituents that they did feel they were listened to and that the final Innovation Agenda was a reflection of that (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013).

Also, Superintendent Young reported having established "buy in" from the teachers union early on in the decision-making process. He states, "I felt the way to gain the support of the teachers was to ask them what they needed and to find a way to be able to deliver that if I agreed it was an important thing" (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). A survey administered by the president of the teachers association in Cambridge revealed that what teachers felt they needed most was time to collaborate. This prompted Superintendent Young to focus heavily on teacher collaboration when writing and presenting the Innovation Agenda (Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

Another example of consensus building in the political stream is the case of the Amigos program. As explained in detail above, many families from the Amigos program were strongly opposed to the disruption the IA would cause to the immersion experience at their school.

Throughout the process of attending community meetings, it became clear to Superintendent Young that, "If we tried to force the Amigos into this the support of the School Committee was likely becoming very fragile" (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

Superintendent Young also compromised on integrating the Amigos program into one of the four upper schools, allowing them to remain a JK-8 program, and therefore gained buy in from the

Amigos community and from the School Committee (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

Policy windows and policy entrepreneurs. The joining of the problems, policy, and political streams opened a policy window. According to Kingdon, a policy window is an opportunity for action that motivates actors to bring together the problems, proposals, and political will to create change (Kingdon, 1995), and it happens at a particular moment in time. The national mood around education reform, the appointment of Superintendent Young and election of Mayor Maher, the reframing of the longstanding conditions in the Cambridge middle grades into a problem directly out of line with the community's stated values, and the presentation of the upper school model as a policy solution to this problem created an opportunity for a dramatic change to the status quo of middle grades education in Cambridge. The fact that all of these streams came together under the conditions they did also increased the likelihood that the Innovation Agenda would be adopted.

Cambridge has 22-month terms for its mayor. This meant that Mayor Maher had a little less than two years to accomplish his goals. As a result of this time limitation Mayor Maher and Superintendent Young set an aggressive timeline and held to it, making the Innovation Agenda their main focus and relentlessly pursuing the agenda to create four strong middle school programs (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013).

Kingdon defines policy entrepreneurs as advocates for proposals who are willing to invest their time and resources to promote a position (Kingdon, 1995). The fact that the Innovation Agenda was approved despite considerable opposition from some parts of the Cambridge community is due in large part to Superintendent Young and Mayor Maher's unwavering resolve that this policy is what was best for the children of Cambridge (M. Maher,

personal communication, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). Their willingness to invest time and energy in pushing through this policy allowed Superintendent Young and Mayor Maher to succeed. One teacher mentioned that she had seen junior highs proposed by two other superintendents during her time working in Cambridge and was skeptical when she first heard Dr. Young's plan, thinking it would never happen (Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). The unexpected result that Cambridge now has four upper school campuses is due in large part to both Mayor Maher and Superintendent Young's commitment.

In addition to the role that Superintendent Young and Mayor Maher played as policy entrepreneurs ready to seize the opportunity of an opening policy window to pass far reaching education reform, certain school communities also emerged as policy entrepreneurs, having a significant impact on the specifics of the Innovation Agenda. One can argue that the Amigos school and the Tobin Montessori program were the "winners" of the Innovation Agenda decision-making process. This is in large part due to the fact that they were prepared to argue their points and chose their timing well. These two school communities mobilized very early. Together they account for 53% of the comments made between February 8th and 18th (20 and 8 total comments respectively, Figure 5). These communities were proactive. They were prepared to join the debate and represent their interests at the first opportunity. The Amigos program in particular has a tumultuous history of campaigning for itself. Similarly the Tobin Montessori program is a young program that has had to sell itself to gain momentum and attract families. These experiences put these school communities in an excellent position to mobilize quickly and advocate for themselves.

In addition, many of the arguments made by families at the Tobin and Amigos school use the same language as the Innovation Agenda, speaking about the achievement gap and SES

balance. Families essentially argue that by honoring their requests the district will improve the likelihood that the goals of the Innovation Agenda will be met. For example:

One fascinating aspect of the Tobin Montessori School has been the evolutionary process of a culturally mixed and economically agnostic group of students and parents who strive to make their program a mature and successful enterprise. It could be that many of the parents enrolled in this program could well afford private schools it is also true that many chose not to because they like to have their children brought up in a socially and economically diverse setting. Moving the Tobin school to another location will upset this process and break up this community. Many low income families who do send their children to Tobin Montessori School will chose not to relocate their kids to a more distance school. For them the choice is not between a regular program and a Montessori program but instead how fast their children are brought to or picked up from school and with the least amount of effort. Many more affluent parents in Montessori program do not wish to see the finely tuned effort ripped a part. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

We are the fastest growing minority group in the United States yet we are the one that lags behind the most. Only 60% of Latinos graduate from high school. That is stunning...Latinos students are scoring in the warning category of the MCAS in a far higher rate than white students or all other students. That's unacceptable. Yet we know of a program that closes that achievement gap. That program is a two way dual language immersion program. We have research that shows that Amigos has shown

that. It is a program works closing the achievement gap of the Latinos, a group that sorely needs it. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

I have a deep appreciation for the goals stated in the IA. Recognize there are insidious problems in our community that need to be addressed. My hope is that with changes to controlled choice, improvements to the family resource center, and perhaps some changes to location Amigos can remain a K-8 and still fit into these goals. There are a lot of innovative programs in the system that works best at K-8. One of these is Amigos. Immersion we know works best in a more extended setting. I believe and I think many studies have shown that our tow way immersion program specifically addresses two of the main goals in Dr. Young's Innovation Agenda. We've proven we can close the achievement gap and we're getting better and better at that and we are also clearly preparing students fro the 21st century by graduating students who are bilingual and have a deep understanding of our global culture... remaining K-8 is the best way that our school can help the superintendent meet some of his most important stated goals. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

It is possible that this organized response helped the Amigos and the Tobin Montessori to get their agenda through and have such an influence on the revisions to the Innovation Agenda. In fact, former Mayor Maher acknowledged that "the immersion program was an anomaly in the system... and the School Committee saw the validity of that program staying a stand alone program", further supporting the notion that the Amigos community successfully argued in favor of its agenda (M. Maher, personal communication, 2013). However discussion with teachers and families revealed that the Amigos program might have had political leverage that other vocal

programs lacked. Parents and teachers mentioned that parents from the Amigos School were particularly influential stakeholders and that one School Committee member was invested in the Amigos community's cause (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). This political leverage may also have increased the likelihood that the district would honor the Amigos community's requests.

On the other hand, the Graham and Parks school community was also generally against many elements of the Innovation Agenda, but the revisions were not as responsive to their concerns. This may have something to do with the timing and nature of the comments made by Graham and Parks families. First of all, the Graham and Parks school community was not nearly as vocal as the Amigos towards the beginning of the process. Graham and Parks families represented 13% (7 comments) of total comments in the first time period. Many of these comments focused on arguing against the creation of a separate middle school program in Cambridge and families advocated keeping the Graham and Parks at JK-8 school. As one of the more highly chosen and successful programs in the district it is possible that the Graham and Parks community felt relatively safe from any changes that would be proposed. In focus groups, teachers and parents admitted to assuming they would be left alone when the conversation about middle schools first started (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; M. Maher, personal communication, 2013; Focus Group 2, April 24, 2013). As a result, it took longer for the Graham and Parks community to mobilize than it did the Tobin and Amigos.

Secondly, the arguments made by many Graham and Parks community members seemed reactive and even somewhat fearful. Parents often pointed out the flaws in the superintendent's plan citing cost and lack of details as points for concern. A number of speakers also remarked

that many families would leave the district during the disruption the Innovation Agenda would cause, including the following:

I question some of the issues behind this change. I am supportive of modifications to our existing K-8 program in the Cambridge schools. Academic excellence and diversity of education can be achieved in a modified K-8 setting. It's easy to find problems with any existing system and optimistically propose a new untried plan. Although many have expressed interest in K-8 schools as we have now and their underlying strengths the process has marginalized this option. And administratively I think the new system will cost quite a bit more and add a lot of layers of bureaucracy.... Many academic disparities stem from disparity in K-5 and geographic location which middle schools will not solve... concentrating resources and applying working models on informing schools and populations might be more productive than a less flexible middle school model." (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

...Concern about stability. In my view it is simply too soon for another reorganization of the Cambridge public schools... I fear that this plan will put us on a self-perpetuating cycle of instability. Self-perpetuating because it gives the message that reorganization is a regular feature of the Cambridge public schools. (Cambridge Public School Committee Meeting, 2011)

It is possible that district staff was less responsive to Graham and Park's request to remain a JK-8 school at Linnaean Street because of the nature of the community's reaction to the initial Innovation Agenda. Many Graham and Park's families were against the foundational principle of the Innovation Agenda, upper school campuses, and were advocating for any

changes to the system to occur within the JK-8 model. As a result, it would have been difficult for district staff to compromise and give these parents what they were asking for without abandoning their mission.

There is also a political argument for why the Graham and Parks may not have seen a response from the district. The Innovation Agenda represents a full district restructuring in lieu of the hybrid model proposed earlier. Superintendent Young stated that he abandoned the hybrid model because it became clear to him that the School Committee would not vote for it and because “This was not just about tinkering around the edges... there was no way to just cosmetically change what was existing and hope for anything better. The whole thing had to be transformed” (J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). There was also a sense in the community that the hybrid model was abandoned to avoid combining students from all the struggling schools into one middle school while leaving students from successful JK-8s in their existing schools (Focus Group 1, April 27, 2013; J. Young, personal communication, April 22, 2013). District staff ultimately decided to go with a strategy that affected everyone rather than only schools that were struggling. Graham and Park’s request to remain a JK-8 goes against this reasoning.

Policy entrepreneurs were instrumental in the development of the Innovation Agenda. Without the dedication of Superintendent Young and Mayor Maher the policy as a whole would likely not have been adopted at all. In terms of specific details of the policy some school communities were more successful than others in getting their requests heard and incorporated into the final policy. The most successful at accomplishing this, the Amigos and Tobin school communities, were successful in large part because their representatives acted as policy entrepreneurs.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This project brought together several areas of interest: the expression of federal educational policy at the local level, the role of child development research in policy-making, and the ways that constituent groups work at shaping policy. These issues are represented in the original research questions:

- Why does the Innovation Agenda focus on a particular framing of the problem to be solved and propose these particular solutions?
- Which exogenous factors in CPS' broader ecology helped shape the local policy agenda?
- Within Cambridge, which endogenous factors contributed to its development?

Kingdon's multiple streams policy framework was a useful analysis tool to use in answering these questions. Using the framework as an organizing structure I was able to develop a narrative of the decision-making process that resulted in the adoption of the Innovation Agenda. In this chapter I summarize findings pertaining to the original research questions and present several key "take-aways" from my analysis.

The Development of the Innovation Agenda

The development of the Innovation Agenda was a complex process involving many actors and much debate about a variety of content areas. The original definition of the problem shaped the final policy. Early on in the process, Superintendent Young used both numerical and anecdotal data to create a sense of urgency around inequities of access to high quality instruction and curriculum and preparation for high school in the middle grades. He framed the problem in terms of social justice and academic excellence, concepts that are in line with community values.

As a result of this early definition of the problem Superintendent Young was well positioned to present his solution: the Innovation Agenda. The specifics of the Innovation Agenda were solidified through the process of creating a policy that was in line with community values while remaining technically feasible. To meet both of these requirements Superintendent Young and his cabinet moved from a more top down prescriptive approach to a “framework” outlined in broad terms based on community input. Finally, the fact that two strong and committed leaders, Mayor Maher and Superintendent Young, were in office at the same time also created a policy window. Their combined knowledge of education and politics greatly increased the likelihood that a policy proposal would be successful.

The Roll of Policy Entrepreneurs

Another interesting aspect on the Innovation Agenda decision-making process is the role that policy entrepreneurs played, both at the district level and at the individual school level. Superintendent Young and Mayor Maher acted as policy entrepreneurs at the district level, pushing the Innovation Agenda as a whole policy forward. However, policy entrepreneurs also emerged in two school communities: the Amigos School and Tobin Montessori program. Both of these groups of families mobilized early in the process and we prepared to defend their positions with language that appealed to district personnel’s agenda. Perhaps partly as a result of this, many of their demands were met.

The Amigos and Tobin school community members’ role as policy entrepreneurs may be related to the makeup of individuals in these vocal communities. Based on demographic data it seems that the Amigos school community differed from the district as a whole in several ways. In 2011, 30.2% of students at the Amigos school were classified as low income compared to 43.5% in the district. The racial demographics of the Amigos population also did not follow

patterns in the whole district. In 2011, 48.4% of students were Hispanic, 33.6% were White, and 6.9% were African American compared to 14.1% Hispanic, 33.6% White, and 32.6% African American in the district (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011). Despite the large Hispanic population of students attending the Amigos and the fact that the Amigos is a two-way language immersion program, students with limited English proficiency make up a smaller percentage of total students at that school than in the district (4.7% vs. 5.7%) (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011). These data suggest that there are fewer poor families in the Amigos community than in the district, which means they likely have a higher level of community engagement than other schools. In addition, the fact that English Language Learners make up a smaller percentage of the Amigos school than in the district as a whole suggests that the community is well established and therefore familiar with the political system. This demographic information, in addition to the Amigos programs' history of self-advocacy, puts the Amigos families in a superior position to successfully influence policy.

In addition, because the Amigos is an immersion program, no children are given a mandatory assignment of the Amigos school under the controlled choice system. This means that families must actively choose to enroll their child in the Amigos school (L. Likis, personal communication, June 24, 2013). To specifically select the Amigos school, families must be knowledgeable about the choices available to them and proactive enough to take the steps necessary to enroll their child in the program. It stands to reason that these families, who are generally well informed, comfortable with the system, and proactive, would be prepared and able to advocate for themselves and their program. Also, the fact that all families at the Amigos

school actively chose to attend that school implies that they feel strongly about the program. It is not surprising that these families would mobilize to preserve the program they selected.

On the other hand the Tobin has a large low income student body, 53.6% of students at the school were classified as low income in 2011 compared to 43.5% in the district. In addition, 20.9% of students attending the Tobin in 2011 had limited English proficiency compared to 5.7% in the district (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011). The Tobin school also served a very different racial mix of students from the Amigos. In 2011, 13.3% of students were Hispanic, 27% were White, and 36.1% were African American, compared to 14.1% Hispanic, 36.9% White, and 32.6% African American in the district (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011). This demographic data shows that the Tobin had a large percentage of at risk students. Families at the Tobin were in general lower income, more likely to be minorities, and more likely to not speak English at home than are families in the district as a whole. One might expect that these groups would be less engaged in the political process. It may be that a strong, small group of families successfully campaigned on behalf of the entire community. Based on my observations of School Committee meetings from January to March 2011, it appears that several of the same Tobin Montessori community members regularly attended meetings and spoke often, to ensure that their voices were heard. Although I did not document the race and socioeconomic status of these individuals, if they largely represented the White, higher SES families in the Tobin Montessori community, this commonality between the Tobin and Amigos could explain how both emerged as policy entrepreneurs.

Exogenous Factors

In the case of the Innovation Agenda exogenous factors provided the main thrust for change within Cambridge. The national education reform movement as well as the increasing use of standardized tests influenced politics in Cambridge. Over the past decade Cambridge Public Schools has moved from being a highly decentralized system of independently operating schools, to a more centralized school district with universally held standards. The Innovation Agenda is another step towards centralization and standardization of practice aimed at raising expectations for all students, in keeping with the national education climate. The influence of the education reform movement can be seen in the language of the Innovation Agenda, which was written using the terminology typically heard in national education reform initiatives.

Endogenous Factors

Endogenous factors explain the nuances of the changes laid out in the Innovation Agenda. Prior to the Innovation Agenda CPS was comprised of 12 small elementary schools of students from Junior Kindergarten to 8th grade. In this structure many schools had small student cohort sizes, and teachers working in isolation. The Innovation Agenda proposed a structural change to address these issues: the creation of four separate upper school campuses each with a critical mass of students and teachers.

Another driving endogenous factor was the need to align the reality of students' experiences with the district's espoused values. The logistical choices made over the course of the Innovation Agenda's development were continually aimed at ensuring the policy was both feasible and in line with community values. This give and take is particularly evident in the decisions about where the upper schools would be housed and the feeder patterns for each upper school campus.

These policy changes were facilitated by a timely change in administration in the city and school district. Dr. Young's appointment as superintendent at the same time as David Maher's election as mayor brought together both the education and political understanding needed to tackle the challenges facing Cambridge Public Schools.

Key Findings

The analysis detailed in the previous chapter revealed many themes about how the Innovation Agenda was developed and adopted. These lessons are specific to this case and cannot be generalized to other instances. However, Cambridge's experience developing the Innovation Agenda is an interesting example of policy agenda setting that is worth considering.

Key results include:

- *Timing appears to have been critical to this innovation.* In the case of the Innovation Agenda, the 22-month term for mayor and the fact that Mayor Maher and Superintendent Young were in office at the same time may have contributed to the Innovation Agenda's successful adoption.
- *In the case of this policy shift, the fact that the Innovation Agenda aligned with community values and the general political climate helped it to gain a place on the policy agenda.* In Cambridge, the Innovation Agenda brought the reality of students' experiences in the Cambridge Public Schools more closely into alignment with widely held beliefs about social justice. At the same time it brought the district more closely into alignment with the nationwide trend towards high expectations and standardization with the goal of decreasing achievement gaps.
- *More generally, the case of the Innovation Agenda in Cambridge suggests that federal or state policy that opportunities to localize can help innovations to be*

successful. When state and federal agencies allow school districts the flexibility to engage in a community planning process, such as in Cambridge, the resulting policy is likely to reflect the values of the community and have the political support necessary to succeed.

- *Along these same lines, the case of the Innovation Agenda also suggests that where there is policy “disregard,” or little explicit policy, as in the case of middle schools, there is room for innovation.* In Cambridge, policy-makers were able to think flexibly and come up with several different approaches for how to address the challenges in the middle grades, settling on the one that they believed was the best fit for their community.

Virtues and Limitations of this Research Approach

This study provides an in-depth analysis of one school district’s attempt to improve the educational experience of its students. By focusing on a small period of time in one district I was able to thoroughly consider the decision-making process that led to a dramatic policy shift. I was in a unique position to conduct this study because of my access to key stakeholders and information about the Innovation Agenda decision-making process (see Chapter 1). My connections in Cambridge were invaluable as I conducted this research; indeed, I believe that it would have been challenging to conduct this study and to reach accurate conclusions without some inside knowledge of the school system. However, my connections and experiences in Cambridge likely have also colored my perceptions of the Innovation Agenda, and although I have tried my best to be impartial throughout this process it was not possible to completely divorce my own opinions from my research.

Triangulation was crucial when conducting this analysis. I integrated several data sources (interviews, focus groups, and documents) from multiple perspectives (families, parents, district staff, and School Committee members) to try to construct the most complete and unbiased narrative possible. Despite my best efforts, not all perspectives are fully included in this analysis. My results show that teachers were relatively quiet throughout the development of the Innovation Agenda from January to March, 2011. I suspect that the absence of teacher voice is largely due to the time period on which I chose to focus. It is possible that many teachers did not feel comfortable speaking up at this point in the process because it was unclear at the time how the School Committee would vote. However, once the School Committee adopted the policy and the focus turned to implementation, had I studied that period as well I would expect to have seen much greater rates of teacher engagement.

Also, the documents included in this analysis did not represent the entire Cambridge community. Families who attended School Committee meetings, posted on list serves, and submitted letters to the Superintendent were likely those most comfortable navigating the political process. As a result, a wide swath of Cambridge families are absent from the narrative constructed here. It is possible that the school district staff were speaking on behalf of these families when they spoke about creating a system that equally educates all students.

An additional limitation of this study is that I did not have access to all the data on the Innovation Agenda decision-making process. Most notably absent are minutes or notes from the twelve school based community meetings held in February and March, 2011. Secondly, the families and teachers who participated in focus groups were not representative of the whole community of Cambridge and CPS. I also did not speak to all members of the School Committee.

Although consequential, the time period covered in this thesis is relatively brief, so it only provides a snapshot of the work that went into the Innovation Agenda. There were many other topics and actors involved at different points in the planning and implementation process that were not reflected in this analysis. Although the decision making process that occurred from January to March, 2011 was relatively inclusive one cannot assume, based on this study, that this was the case for the process by which the policy was implemented.

Finally, this analysis only examines one case of local education reform, which limits the extent to which it can be generalized to other communities. One should be cautious when generalizing from a single case, particularly a “best case” scenario. Most school districts do not have the resources or high levels of community engagement found in Cambridge so it is unlikely that a political decision-making process would play out exactly the same way it did in this instance.

Future Research

As mentioned above, this thesis focuses specially on one small period of time in the development of the Innovation Agenda. Future research could consider how the framework adopted on March 11, 2011 was rolled out across the district. Looking at the planning year that followed the adoption of the policy by the School Committee would complete the picture of how the Innovation Agenda developed, from conception to execution.

Future research could also examine the reasons why some subgroups of the community did not participate in the political process leading up the adoption of the Innovation Agenda. As explained above, there was wide variation in how engaged families, teachers, and school communities were in the process. There are many possible explanations for this variation,

including apathy about the process, disbelief that change would actually happen, and a sense of disempowerment. Future research could unpack these and other possibilities.

Another area for future research could be an investigation of local education reform in other districts to explore whether the process in Cambridge is similar or dissimilar to policy development processes elsewhere. More case studies of policy development in local school districts is essential to understanding how federal initiatives that promote innovation at the local level play out.

Final Thoughts

The case of the development of the Innovation Agenda in Cambridge Massachusetts provides insight into the complexity of the policy making process. Often, people in the midst of policy changes do not see any rhyme or reason to the decision-making process, or they sometimes think it is predetermined to turn out in one way or another. This case study demonstrates the complexity of the process, how much timing, particular actors, and the prevailing mood – both within communities and outside them – do play a role.

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Tables

Table 1	
<i>Granular codes contained in each general category</i>	
General Categories	Codes contained
Physical schools	Groupings
	Geography
	Roll out
	Cohort size
Approach to schools	US system
	Protecting programs
Philosophy	SES
	Educational achievement
	Cohort size
	Teacher collaboration

Figures

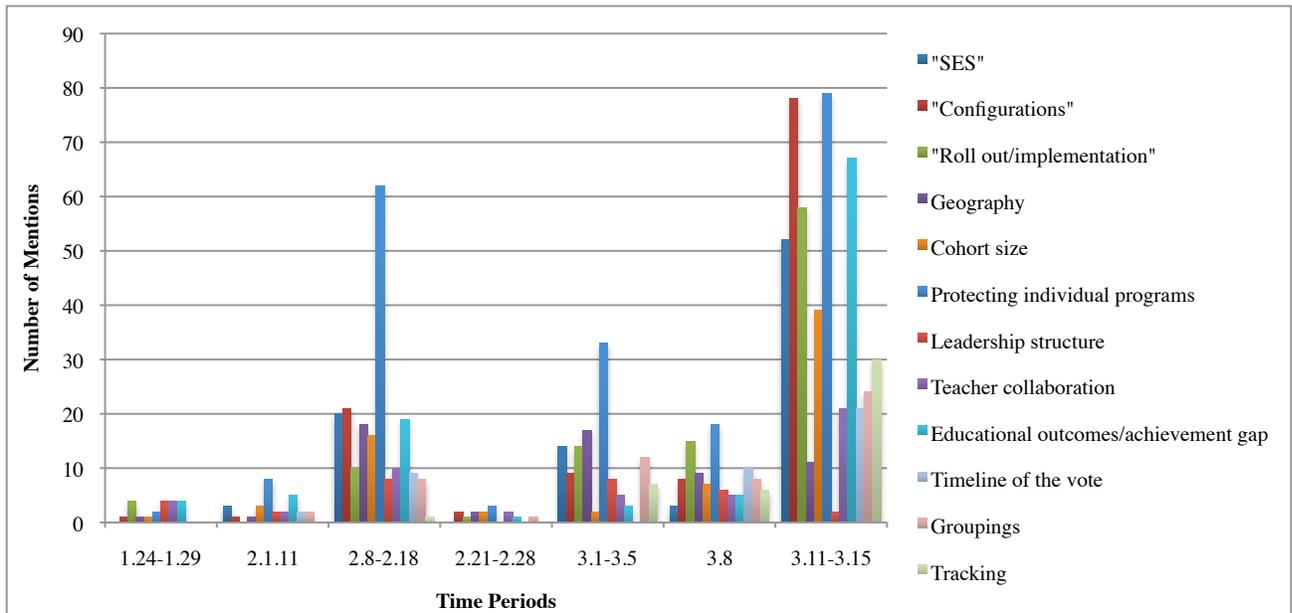


Figure 1: Overview of recurring themes across time periods.

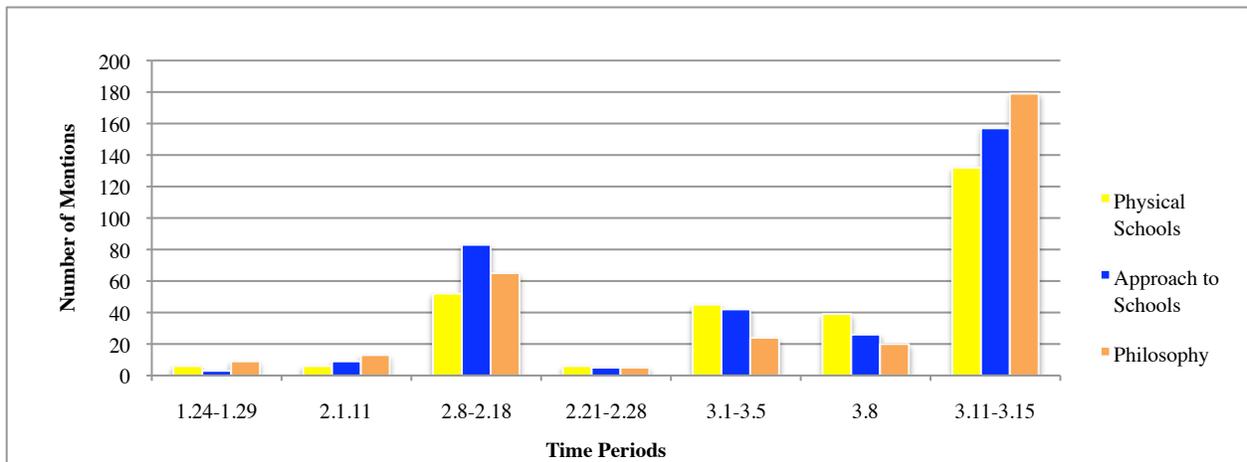


Figure 2: Overall mentions of general content categories over time.

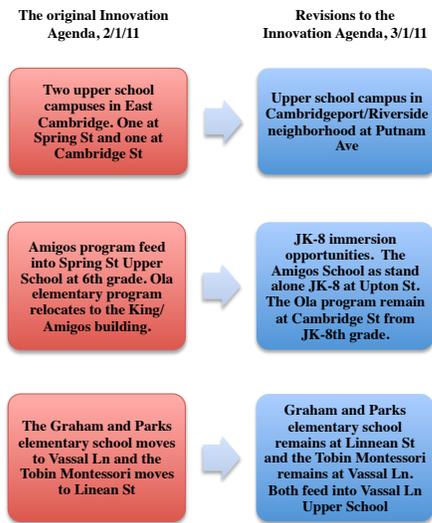


Figure 3: Changes from the original Innovation Agenda to the revised Innovation Agenda.

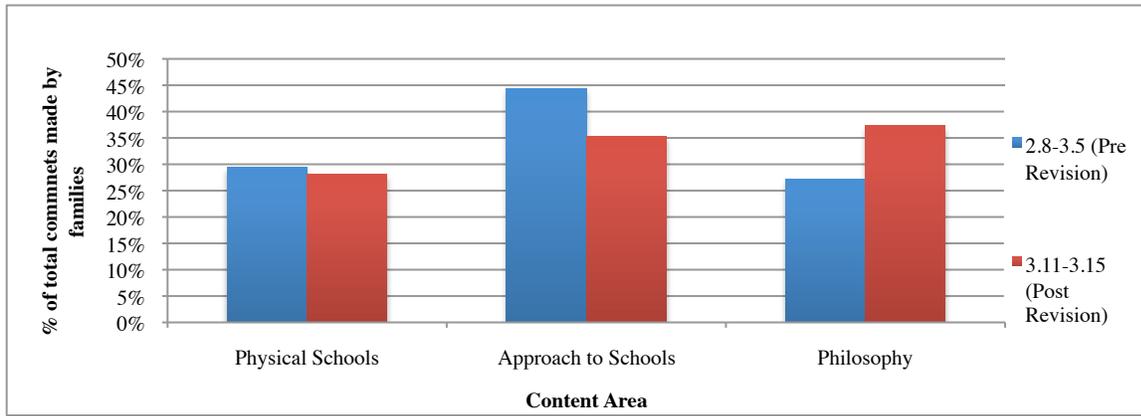


Figure 4: Comments made by families about each general category before and after the revisions to the Innovation Agenda.

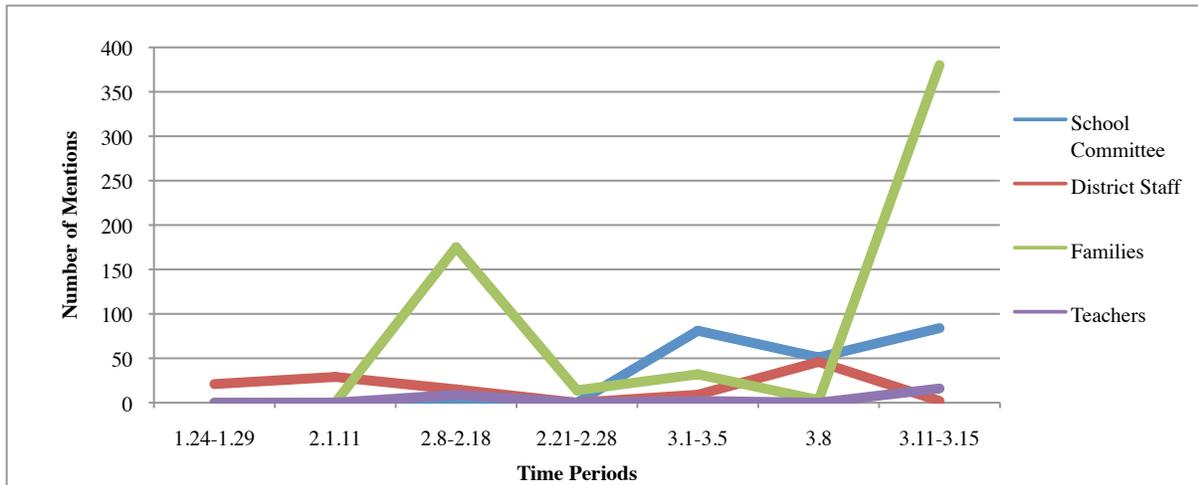


Figure 5: Total mentions by constituent groups over time.

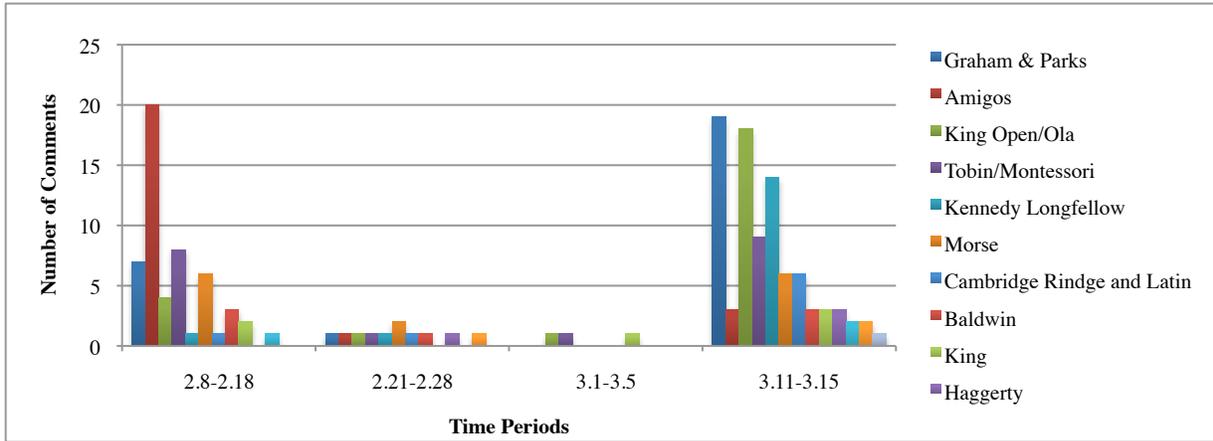


Figure 6: Total school communities represented over time.

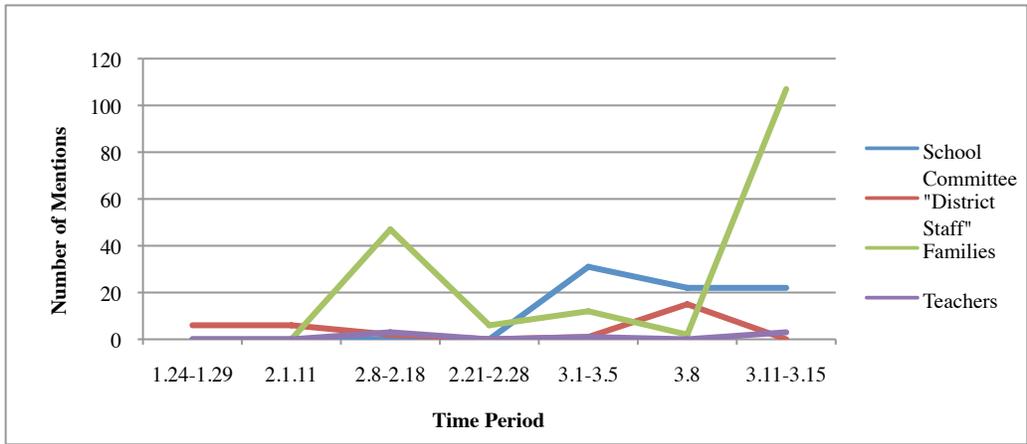


Figure 7: Mentions of physical schools over time by constituent group.

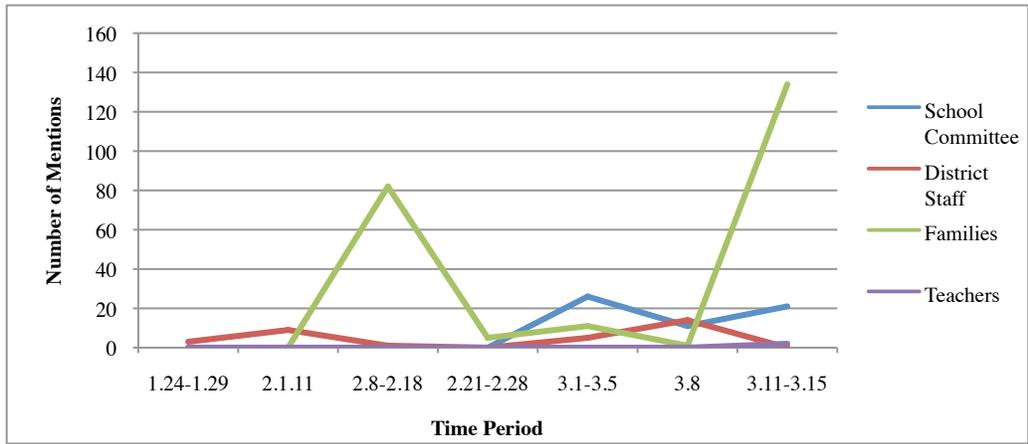


Figure 8: Mentions of approach to school over time by constituent group.

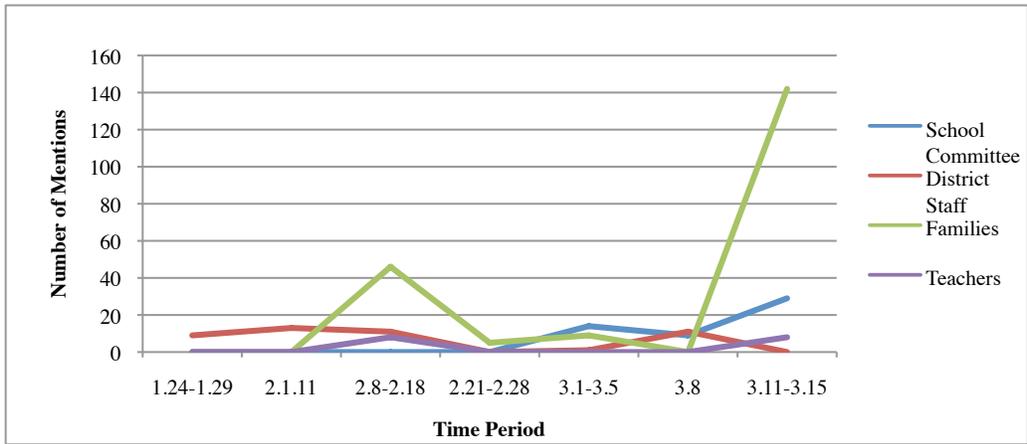


Figure 9: Mentions of philosophy by constituent group.

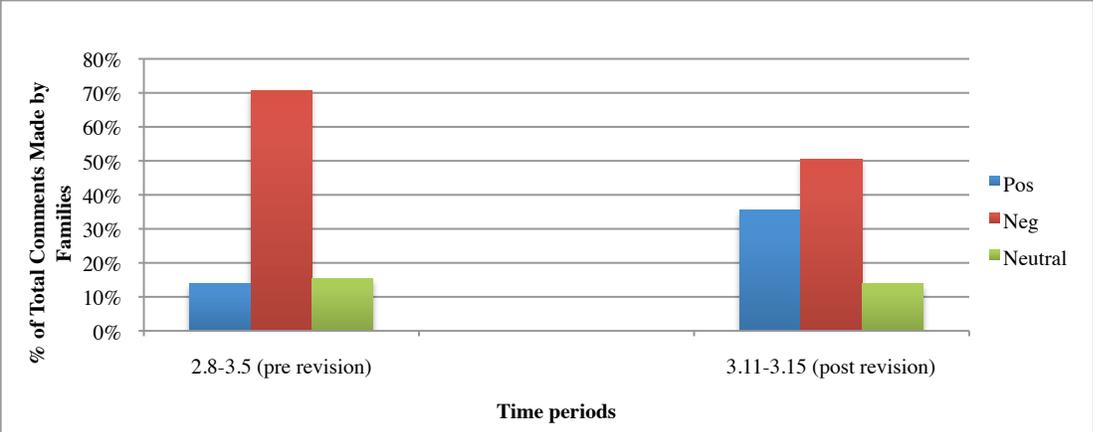


Figure 10: Valence of comments made by families about physical school.

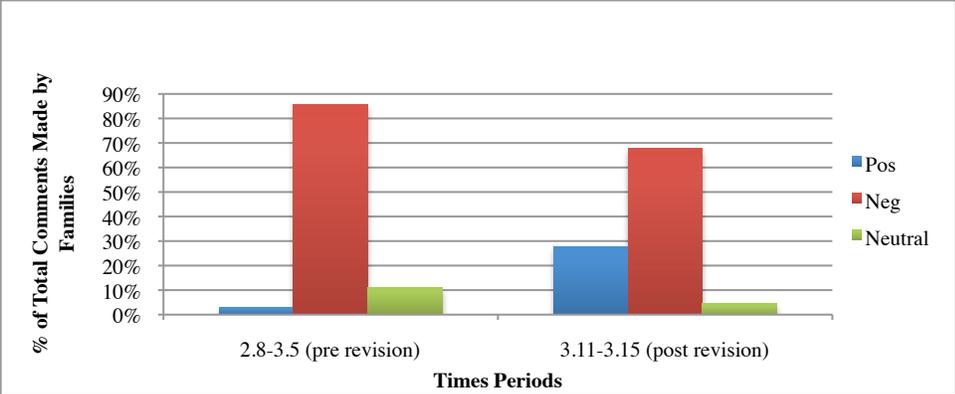


Figure 11: Valence of comments made by families about approach to school.

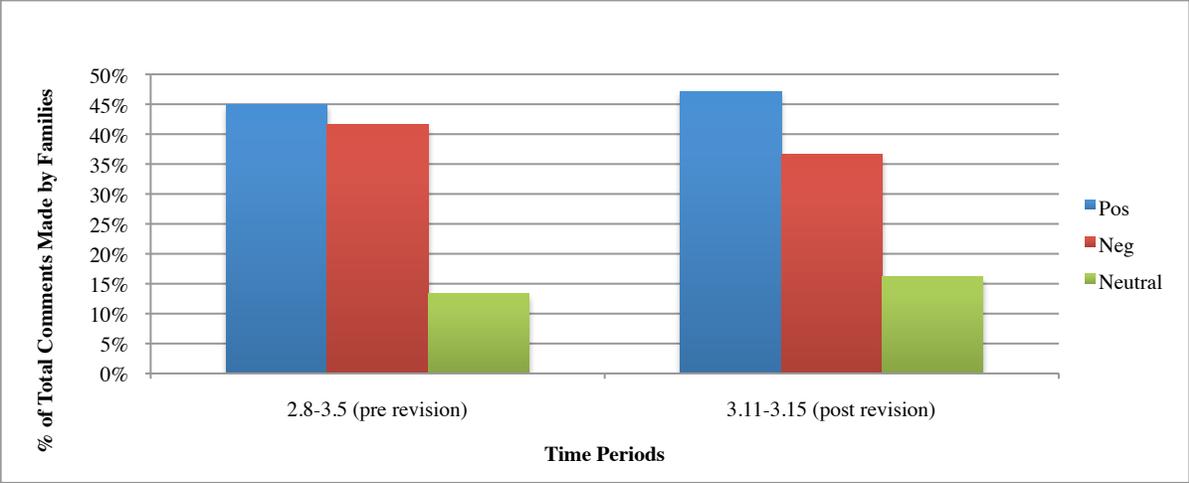


Figure 12: Valence of comments made by families about philosophy.

Appendix A**January 24th – 29th, 2011**

Document title	Description	Date
Improvements to the instructional core	List of possible components to support an enhanced middle grades program	January 24, 2011
Cabinet issues for Friday January 28 th	List of key issues around the IA	January 28, 2011
A Salute to Dr. Martin Luther King	NAACP mailing mentioning JY's remarks about the IA at the 26 th Annual Cambridge Memorial Breakfast	January 29, 2011

February 1st, 2011

Document title	Description	Date
Superintendent's presentation to the School Committee	Superintendent presents the IA to the School Committee and public for the first time.	February 1, 2011

February 7th – February 18th, 2011

Document title	Description	Date
Student Responses The Innovation Plan	Compiled list of student responses to IA from current students and alumni of CRLS.	Winter, 2011
IA School Leadership Organizational Chart and Staffing Overview and Timeline		February 7, 2011
Issues surfaced from families	A bulleted list of issues that have come up during discussions with families and what is needed to address them.	February 8, 2011
Beyond the 4 th Wall Children's Musical Program draft proposal	Proposal outlining how the program can work to build community in the new Upper Schools.	February 8, 2011
Letter from a CPS parent to JY posted to the CPS parents list serve	Asks for a staged approach to rolling out the middle school plan – pilot schools, study pilot schools, create final plan, and roll out plan to all schools.	February 8, 2011
Morse community response to the proposed Innovation Agenda	Position paper from the Morse school community about elements they	February 9, 2011

Public town hall meetings flyer,	Flyer advertising the public meetings and School Committee public hearings where community members will have an opportunity to comment on the IA.	February 9-15, 2011
Research demonstrating that children do worse in middle schools than K-8		February 10, 2011
Internal communication from Maryann MacDonald and James Moloney to JY	Includes MCAS data and SES status for Baldwin, Haggerty, Peabody and King.	February 11, 2011
Comments during public comment at SC meeting submitted to the record,	Letter of support of IA from parents.	February 11, 2011
Comments during public comment at SC meeting submitted to the record,	Letter of support of IA from parents.	February 11, 2011.
Post from parent to CPS Parents list serve	Reviews each of the options presented by the JK-8 Educational Structure Team and analyzes the pros and cons.	February 14, 2011
Post from parent to GP list serve	Outlines concerns about moving GP and disrupting the GP community in the IA.	February 14, 2011
JY and cabinet's notes for individual school meetings	Outlines the rationale for IA and gives details about each motivation for the plan.	February 15-March 5, 2011
School Committee meeting field notes	Notes of public comment and SC members' discussion	February 15, 2011
Comments from Cambridge School Committee public hearing re: the IA	Comments from community members on the IA made during public comment and submitted to the record.	February 15, 2011
Public comment roster	Tally of people who spoke and where they're from during public comment about IA.	February 15, 2011
Comments submitted to the record from SC meeting.	Discusses the role of the Ola program in the IA. Calls for language immersion to remain a k-8 model and for the program to stay in the Portuguese community.	February 16, 2011
Cambridge Kids' Council Meeting,	Superintendent Young presents the IA to the Kids' Council and fields questions.	February 17, 2011

Note from the Superintendent,	Letter from JY to the community thanking everyone for input, whether in favor or voicing concerns about the IA. Also thanks his team for their hard work. Lays out plan to make revisions to the plan and present to the SC the week of March 7 th . Available in multiple languages.	February 17, 2011
Cartoon in Cambridge Chronicle	Depicts JY's plan as an "Upper School Tron".	February 17, 2011
Amigos school council statement on IA	Outlines Amigos school's position on IA- supports the goals but has concerns about how the 2 way immersion model will be treated under the agenda. Offers three proposals for how to treat language immersion programs within the new US structure and talks about location and school groupings.	February 18, 2011
Letter from library teachers to SC, cabinet, instructional council, and principals submitted to public comment,	Discusses the role of library specialists in the IA and outlines what a middle schools library program should include.	February 18, 2011
Letter from the GP steering committee to JY and SC,	Based on discussion in school community through staff meetings, community meetings, online discussion, and one on one conversations the steering committee requests that several design principals be incorporated into IA. Letter also outlines several aspects that are not clearly explained in the proposal and requests clarification from superintendent.	February 18, 2011

February 21st – February 28th, 2011

Document title	Description	Date
NAACP Cambridge call to action	Advertisement that Superintendent Young will be speaking at a Cambridge NAACP event.	February 21, 2011
Morse School Recommendation to the Innovation Agenda	Letter from the Morse school community asking JY to make certain changes to the IA.	February 24, 2011

Petition in Opposition to the Superintendent's Innovation Agenda	Petition signed by 235 families from several schools, teachers, alumni, and prospective families against the IA.	February 28, 2011
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March 1st – March 5th, 2011

Document title	Description	Date
School Committee Round Table	Round table discussion between SC members and Superintendent and cabinet about the details of the IA. Opportunity for SC to ask questions and clarifications about IA and to give advice to JY.	March 1, 2011
Letter from Representative Alice Wolf to JY	Outlines praise and concerns about the IA	March 2, 2011
"A Modest Proposal" from the Tobin community	Proposed changes to the IA made by the Tobin community	March 3, 2011
Letter to King School families	Letter from the principal and school council members to the community detailing the schools position on the IA.	March 3, 2011
Communication to Tobin families	Invites families to a Q&A session with JY and includes an information page from the Tobin Family Outreach Council	March 4 th , 2011
Letter from King Open Ola to JY	Outlines their priorities for the two way immersion program.	March 5, 2011
School Committee Roundtable	Superintendent and cabinet about the details of the IA. Opportunity for SC to ask questions and clarifications about IA and to give advice to JY.	March 8, 2011

March 8th, 2011

Document title	Description	Date
School Committee Roundtable	Superintendent presents revisions to the IA and SC responds	March 8, 2011

March 11th – March 15th, 2011

Document title	Description	Date
Regular School Committee Meeting	Public comment on the IA	March 11, 2011
Morse Community Response to the Innovation Agenda	Letter from the Morse community to the School Committee outlining their priorities to be addressed during implementation.	March 11, 2011
Letter from City Councilor Denise Simmons to JY	Notes concern that many parents are not attending schools meetings. Suggests this may be due to lack of childcare.	March 10, 2011
Letter from King Open School Council to School Committee	Outlines priorities and concerns about IA.	March 14, 2011
Posting to GP list serve by GP teacher	Statement against the IA particularly breaking up K-8 and humanities	March 14, 2011
Statement from the Principals of the CPS to the Cambridge School Committee submitted to the public record	Outlines elements of the IA they support	March 15, 2011
Regular School Committee Meeting	Public comment and School Committee “speeches” and final vote on IA.	March 15, 2011

Table A: List of documents included in document analysis broken into time periods.

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions

I'm analyzing the documents you gave me and am holding a few focus groups to try and understand the process that led to the adoption of the Innovation Agenda. This is a pretty amazing change, effected in a short amount of time and I'm trying to understand how that happened. I'm focusing on the sequence of events that led to the various decisions and also the various constituencies and what their leverage was at different points in the process. I need your help to fill in some holes in my narrative and also I'm interested from your perspective about key moments and key decisions that led to the final IA.

1. Framing the problem:

The Innovation Agenda was proposed as a solution to existing problems in the Cambridge Public Schools.

- A) What do you think the problems in Cambridge's middle grades were prior to the creation of the Innovation Agenda?
- B) In the Innovation Agenda Superintendent Young states that the Innovation Agenda was created "with the knowledge that today's CPS middle grades experience is not what it must be for students and teachers... in response to the reality that today's eighth grade graduates are not entering our high school equally and consistently well prepared to succeed in, and make the most of, the academic and social opportunities that await them there. It was created to meet the clarion call that we close persistent and pernicious achievement gaps for our city's children. (Innovation Agenda)".
 - i. How does this problem statement resonate with you?
- C) How well do you think the Innovation Agenda will solve these problems?

2. Key decision points and decision-making processes:

We are in the process of implementing this IA. To get to this point a lot of decisions were made. I'm trying to understand this decision-making and how we ended up where we are today. What I'd like you to think about is from your perspectives what are the key decisions (have a few probes in mind) and what's the process by which the decision was made. When thinking about this please consider specific issues and the Innovation Agenda as a whole.

- A) What was on the table that got decided?
- B) How did these decisions get made? Any events, meetings etc. that initiated that.
 - i. *Have on hand my list of decision points, meetings to use as prompts. Ex. here are meetings that are School Committee meetings/school council meetings/community meetings. Was there anything special in your memory that happened at these meetings?*
- C) Were there any big issues that were never decided?

3. Content:

In the decision-making process leading up to the vote to adopt the Innovation Agenda on March 15th, 2011 there seemed to be some issues that had relatively little controversy attached to them (*for example X and Y*) and others that caused significant controversy (*such as X and Y*).

- A) What were some issues that you perceived to have relatively little controversy attached to them?
- B) What were other issues of substance or process that caused some controversy?
- C) Which content areas were the district, School Committee, and families equally concerned about, if any? Which content areas was one group concerned about but others paid little attention to?
- D) Why did certain topics come up at different times?
- E) Were these issues resolved? If so, how?
- F) What were the concerns about middle schools? But the innovation agenda ends up with middle schools. So how did that happen?

4. Process:

This planning process was very complex: it happened at the school level and the city level and covered many issues of critical importance.

- A) Were there some constituent groups who were more vocal or more concerned with particular issues or who were involved at a particular point in the process?
- B) Were there points where certain constituencies seemed to have more or less influence? Was that at particular points in time or on particular issues?
 - i. *Looking at points in the process – early, middle late – when people are generating ideas as opposed to deciding things. Maybe very inclusive at early stages but not at the end.*
 - ii. *Which school communities seemed to benefit most from the original Innovation Agenda and then the revised version?*

5. Now that the Innovation Agenda is being rolled out I'm curious about how successful, if at all, you think it is going to be.

- A) Do you think it will be successful overall?
- B) In which specific areas do you think it will or will not be successful?

Interview with Superintendent Young

As you know, I'm analyzing the documents you gave me and am holding a few focus groups to try and understand the process that led to the adoption of the Innovation Agenda. This is a pretty amazing change, effected in a short amount of time and I'm trying to understand how that happened. I'm focusing on the sequence of events that led to the various decisions and also the various constituencies and what their leverage was at different points in the process. I need your help to fill in some holes in my narrative and also I'm interested from your perspective about key moments and key decisions that led to the final IA.

For ease of our conversation I'd like to talk about 4 time points: when you were hired, the initial recommendation presentations, the original IA, and the revisions. I'm trying to understand from your perspective how you moved through each of these times points and achieved the clarity of the vision as well as the constituent support to get us to the final IA.

In this interview it would be helpful for me to get feedback about

- ❖ The original definition of the problem with the middle grades and whether that definition changed over this time.
- ❖ Single events/occurrences both inside the district and outside the district that moved the problem and solution along.
- ❖ Constituent groups and their influence over this time.

1. So lets start with the problem. Would you start the story for me when you were first hired as superintendent.
 - a. When you were hired how was the initial problem framed?
 - b. Did the School Committee ask anything of you specifically, in terms of addressing the problem as they defined it?
 - c. What about you, back when you were hired what did you see as the problem?
 - d. Did this definition change over time? How did it change? Why?
 - i. What influences outside of the Cambridge/CPS community influenced the way you thought about the problem?
 - ii. What impact, if any, did the national education reform climate (MCAS, RFTT etc) have on your thinking?
2. Lets talk about particular events and how that shaped the discussion. What happened between then and how you arrived at the Initial Recommendations you presented in February 2010?
 - a. What additional data, problem solving, events happened to bring you to your initial recommendations?
 - b. What were the main events that happened between that July and your presentation of initial recommendations in February 2010 that got you to those conclusions?
 - c. How did you come to the initial conclusion that the hybrid model would be best?
2. From your perspective, please walk me through what happened between the initial middle school recommendations presentation and the original IA presented on February 1st, 2011.

- a. How did the community react to the hybrid model proposal?
 - b. What were the key decision points/events/constituent reactions from February 2010 to February 2011?
 - c. How did you come to the US network proposal that is the backbone of the IA?
3. Once you had settled on the original Innovation Agenda and presented it to the community and School Committee you decided to make some revisions. How did you decide which parts of the original Innovation Agenda to revise?
 - a. Some school communities seemed to get what they wanted – Amigos and Tobin – and some did not – GP (humanities and location) and KO (mixed grades, US start at 7th).
 - b. Did you consider making any additional changes after the revisions were released on the 8th?
4. My initial impression as I'm beginning to analyze the documents you gave me is that responses were initially focused on the nitty gritty (where the upper schools would be located, how many kids would be in a grade, whether there would be world languages in the schools etc.). As the process went along people's comments, both negative and positive, seemed to get more conceptual.
 - a. Is that your impression as well?
 - b. My initial reading of the documents is that in the beginning the objection to the middle schools had a lot to do with the details and implementation and that towards the vote on March 15th arguments seemed to be more global such as "this wont solve the achievement gap" or "this wont reduce SES imbalance". Do you think this is true? If so, why do you think this is? Did people shift their opinions? Did people take a different strategic approach? Is it a different group of people speaking at different time points?
5. Could you talk a little bit about whether you had an explicit strategy for gaining support for the IA? Please tell me about it.
6. Is there anything else you think is important for me to know as I write this story? Is there anything I'm missing here? Was there something for you that really made the difference? Is there anything that we didn't talk about that really prepared you for making this particular thing happen? Did you come at this issue with a particular experience/background/belief?
7. Do you have any recommendations to other systems that are making similar changes? What lessons would you share?

Interview with Councillor Maher

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me. As I said earlier, for my master's thesis at Tufts I'm trying to understand the process that led to the adoption of the Innovation Agenda. To do so, I've spent much of the past year analyzing documents given to me by the Superintendent and conducting a number of focus groups and interviews with people who were centrally involved or are directly affected by the IA. I'm focusing on the sequence of events that led to the various key decisions and also on the positions of various constituencies and what their leverage was at different points in the process. Yours is a unique and critical perspective on the process, and will help me frame my analysis. Of course there are dozens of time points around which this story could be anchored, but my research to date has highlighted four *moments* in the process:

- the time of Superintendent Young's hiring was hired in July 2009,
- the Superintendent's initial recommendation presentation was made in February 2010,
- the presentation of the original IA in February 2011, and the presentation of the IA revisions on March 8th 2011.

In this interview it would be helpful for me to get feedback about

- ❖ The original definition of the problem with the middle grades and whether that definition changed over this time.
- ❖ Single events/occurrences both inside the district and outside the district that moved the problem and solution along.
- ❖ How the policy progressed through each of the time points noted above
- ❖ Constituent groups and their influence over this time.

8. So let's discuss the problem. First of all, let's talk a little bit about the history of middle grades education in Cambridge. You have been involved in local government on the School Committee, on the city council, and as mayor for some time.
 - a. From your perspective when did the discussion about middle grades first begin?
 - b. What did you see as the issue?
 - c. What are some solutions that have historically been presented to address it?

9. Now would you please tell me a little about when you first hired Superintendent Young as the superintendent.
 - a. To what extent did the issue of the middle grades feature in the decision to hire Superintendent Young?
 - b. When he was first hired how was the initial problem about the middle grades framed for him by the School Committee?
 - c. Did the School Committee ask anything of Superintendent Young specifically, in terms of addressing the problem?
 - d. Did this definition change over time? How did it change? Why?
 - i. What influences outside of the Cambridge/CPS community influenced the way you thought about the problem?
 - ii. What impact, if any, did the national education reform climate (MCAS, RFTT etc) have on your thinking?

3. Let's talk about particular events and how that shaped the discussion. From your perspective, what happened between superintendent Young's hiring and the Initial Recommendations he presented in February 2010?
 - a. What additional data, problem solving, events happened to bring you to your initial recommendations?
 - b. What were the main events that happened between that July and his presentation of initial recommendations in February 2010 that resulted in the recommendations he put forward?
 - c. What was your initial reaction to the hybrid model Superintendent Young recommended?

10. From your perspective, please walk me through what happened between the initial middle school recommendations presentation and the original IA presented on February 1st, 2011.
 - a. How did the community react to the hybrid model proposal?
 - b. What were the key decision points/events/constituent reactions from February 2010 to February 2011?
 - c. From your perspective, what was the process that led to the change from the hybrid model to the US network proposal that is the backbone of the IA?

11. After presenting the original Innovation Agenda to the community and School Committee Superintendent Young decided to make some revisions. From your perspective, how do you think it was determined which parts of the original Innovation Agenda would be revised?
 - a. Some school communities seemed to get what they wanted – Amigos and Tobin – and some did not – GP (humanities and location) and KO (mixed grades, US start at 7th).
 - b. Was there consideration about making any additional changes after the revisions were released on the 8th?

12. Is there anything else you think is important for me to know as I write this story? Is there anything I'm missing here? Was there something for you that really made the difference?

13. Do you have any recommendations to other systems that are making similar changes? What lessons would you share?

Appendix C

Code Book		
Code	Description	Valence
SES balance	Any reference to segregation or imbalance based on race or class in schools or in the city.	+ IA would have a positive impact on SES - IA wouldn't help SES
US system/potential configuration models	All of the different ways the district could be configured – k-8 vs. k-6 vs. k-6 etc.	+ pro proposed US structure - against proposed US structure (usually means pro k-8)
Roll out/implementation	How the IA would move from policy to reality. Includes things like curriculum design, staffing, budget, schedules etc.	+ pro proposed roll out to all campuses at once - against proposed roll out to all campuses at once or concerns about implementation elements
Geography	Physical placement of schools	+ agree to geography - concerns about school placement
Language program	Any reference to the 2 way language immersion programs	+ language programs are fine in new structure - new structure does not support language programs adequately
Cohort size/expanded opportunities	Any reference to how the cohort size of grades supports or doesn't support access to opportunity	+ larger cohort size is good - larger cohort size is bad/unnecessary
Protecting individual programs	Any reference to maintaining either a specific program or programs that are "working" in general across the district in the new model	+ new schools will be desirable programs - US model will lose value of existing programs
Leadership structure	Any reference to leadership in the US campuses	+ pleased with proposed leadership model - dissatisfied/concerned about proposed leadership model
Balance between feeder schools	How the 2-3 school communities in each US campus will/will not come together with an equal seat at the table	+ think new communities will be strong - concerned about "big fish" and "little fish" in new US communities

Teacher collaboration	Opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues	+ IA will positively increase teacher collaboration - concerns about whether IA will positively increase teacher collaboration
Educational outcomes/achievement gap	Impact of the plan on the achievement gap, discussion of academic equity	+ IA will decrease achievement gap/result in more equity - IA will not decrease achievement gap or create more equitable schools
Sameness/difference	Degree of autonomy and top-down control in US campuses	+ pleased with stated goals re: autonomy in USs - concerned about level of autonomy USs will have
Timeline of the vote	Changes to the SC calendar regarding the vote on the IA	+ happy with timeline - want changes to timeline, feels rushed
Groupings	Feeder patters into US campuses	+ pleased with school groupings - concerned about feeder patterns to USs groupings
Tracking	Differentiated instruction and/or leveled classes in the US campuses	+ like language in IA about academic challenge - dissatisfied with language/concerned about tracking

Table C: Codebook used to analyze documents for recurring themes and valence.

Note: neutral statements are questions or requests for clarification or more information about a topic. They generally do not involve a statement of opinion and are frequently not associated with a specific school community (but not always).

Appendix D

Enrollment Report															*Sabbatical Students not included			
School	Enrollment	OSE	SES Free	SES Pd	FLL	White	African Amer.	Asian	Nat. Amer.	Nat Haw. Pac. Islander	Multi Race NH	Multi Race His.	F	M				
<i>Amigos School</i>	295	50 16%	111 37%	184 62%	94	86 29%	22 7%	9 3%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	16 5%	160 54%	135 45%				
<i>Baldwin School</i>	383	59 15%	114 29%	269 70%	6	186 48%	104 27%	38 9%	3 0%	1 0%	20 5%	31 8%	176 45%	207 54%				
<i>Cambridgeport School</i>	295	46 15%	116 39%	179 60%	11	126 42%	92 31%	40 13%	2 0%	0 0%	12 4%	23 7%	158 53%	137 46%				
<i>Fleet/May Academy</i>	249	71 28%	173 69%	76 30%	10	38 15%	125 50%	16 6%	5 2%	3 1%	7 2%	55 22%	118 47%	131 52%				
<i>Graham & Parks School</i>	416	71 17%	138 33%	278 66%	44	195 46%	98 23%	68 16%	3 0%	1 0%	18 4%	33 7%	207 49%	209 50%				
<i>Haggerty School</i>	296	65 21%	105 35%	191 64%	18	130 43%	80 27%	45 15%	2 0%	2 0%	22 7%	15 5%	138 46%	158 53%				
<i>Kennedy/Lanfellow School</i>	368	62 16%	231 62%	137 37%	24	119 32%	134 36%	35 9%	1 0%	1 0%	5 1%	73 19%	180 48%	188 51%				
<i>King Open School</i>	498	109 21%	226 45%	272 54%	57	250 50%	122 24%	36 7%	3 0%	1 0%	24 4%	62 12%	224 44%	274 55%				
<i>King School</i>	263	52 19%	140 53%	123 46%	27	40 15%	125 51%	47 17%	0 0%	2 0%	11 4%	28 10%	126 47%	137 52%				
<i>Morse School</i>	419	91 21%	208 49%	211 50%	10	135 32%	158 36%	59 14%	2 0%	2 0%	22 5%	46 10%	223 53%	196 46%				
<i>Peabody School</i>	521	117 22%	239 45%	282 54%	15	193 37%	201 38%	61 11%	0 0%	2 0%	21 4%	43 8%	247 47%	274 52%				
<i>Tobin School</i>	364	74 20%	174 47%	190 52%	79	97 26%	129 35%	73 20%	5 1%	0 0%	18 4%	42 11%	189 51%	175 48%				
School Grp Totals	4367	867 19%	1975 45%	2392 54%	305 7%	1595 36%	1395 31%	527 12%	26 0%	15 0%	196 4%	613 14%	2146 49%	2221 50%				
<i>CRLS</i>	1593	373 23%	736 46%	857 53%	71	577 36%	606 38%	139 8%	10 0%	1 0%	26 1%	234 14%	776 48%	817 51%				
School Grp Totals	1593	373 23%	736 46%	857 53%	71 4%	577 36%	606 38%	139 8%	10 0%	1 0%	26 1%	234 14%	776 48%	817 51%				
<i>C</i>	383	86 22%	158 41%	225 58%	13	148 38%	142 37%	31 8%	3 0%		4 1%	54 14%	190 49%	193 50%				
<i>L</i>	384	97 25%	196 51%	188 48%	24	133 34%	160 41%	25 6%	3 0%		3 0%	60 15%	185 48%	199 51%				
<i>R</i>	381	91 23%	173 45%	208 54%	14	139 36%	150 39%	40 10%	4 1%		3 0%	45 11%	177 46%	204 53%				
<i>S</i>	383	84 21%	171 44%	212 55%	20	141 36%	129 33%	43 11%	0 0%		10 2%	60 15%	184 48%	199 51%				
<i>E</i>	62	15 24%	38 61%	24 38%		16 25%	25 40%	0 0%	0 0%		6 9%	15 24%	40 64%	22 35%				
<i>OSE TUITIONED OUT</i>	184	174 94%	18 9%	51 27%		73 39%	74 40%	6 3%	0 0%	1 0%	0 0%	30 16%	56 30%	128 69%				
School Grp Totals	184	174 94%	18 9%	51 27%	0	73 39%	74 40%	6 3%	0 0%	1 0%	0 0%	30 16%	56 30%	128 69%				
District Wide Totals	6144	1414 23%	2729 44%	3300 53%	466 7%	2345 38%	2975 48%	672 10%	36 0%	17 0%	222 3%	877 14%	2978 48%	3166 51%				

Data from Unofficial October 1,2009 Data

Created by MIS DMS Team, Cambridge Public Schools

Table A: Demographic information about students in each of the 12 JK-8th grade elementary schools that existed prior to the Innovation Agenda.

Year One Likely Scenario Under Innovation Agenda												
Graham & Parks at Tobin												
	Grade 4			Grade 5			Grade 6			Grades 4-6		
	PD	Free	Total									
Graham & Parks	29	13	42	28	14	42	24	17	41	81	44	125
Tobin	8	9	17	8	9	17	2	9	11	18	27	45
Haggerty	21	13	34	20	12	32	N/A	N/A	N/A	41	25	66
Total	58	35	93	56	35	91	26	26	52	140	96	236
Kennedy-Longfellow												
	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free	Total
Kennedy-Longfellow	9	11	20	15	20	35	22	15	37	46	46	92
Amigos	16	15	31	14	12	26	16	11	27	46	38	84
Morse	23	18	41	14	26	40	21	15	36	58	59	117
OLA Program	3	5	8	1	6	7	2	2	4	6	13	19
Total	51	49	100	44	64	108	61	43	104	156	156	312
Peabody Building												
	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free	Total
Peabody	14	20	34	28	16	44	36	25	61	78	61	139
Baldwin	27	15	42	24	18	42	25	13	38	76	46	122
King	12	8	20	7	16	23	4	13	17	23	37	60
Total	53	43	96	59	50	109	65	51	116	177	144	321
King Open Building												
	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free/R	Total	PD	Free	Total
King Open	26	17	43	24	15	39	25	13	38	75	45	120
Cambridgeport	17	15	32	14	14	28	14	7	21	45	36	81
Fletcher Maynard	4	13	17	5	10	15	4	12	16	13	35	48
Total	47	45	92	43	39	82	43	32	75	133	116	249
	<u>209</u>	<u>172</u>		<u>202</u>	<u>188</u>		<u>195</u>	<u>152</u>		<u>606</u>	<u>512</u>	
		381			390			347			1118	

Notes:

No SEI, No OSE self contained students

OLA removed from King Open and placed at Kennedy-Longfellow Building

Current Grades 4,5,6 rolled forward except for the Haggerty where only grades 4 and 5 rolled forward

Grades 4,5 and 6 represent grades 6,7 and 8 for year 2012-2013

Table B: Breakdown of free, reduced, and paid lunch students at each of the upper schools campuses under the original Innovation Agenda, based on 2010 enrollment data.

10-1-10 Enrollment

Year One Likely Scenario Under Innovation Agenda													
	Grade 4			Grade 5			Grade 6			Grades 4-6			
	PD	Free	Total	PD	Free	Total	PD	Free	Total	PD	Free	Total	
Vassal Lane Building													
Graham & Parks	29	13	42	28	14	42	24	17	41	81	44	125	59% Paid
Tobin	8	9	17	8	9	17	2	9	11	18	27	45	41% Free/R
Haggerty	21	13	34	20	12	32	N/A	N/A	N/A	41	25	66	
Total	58	35	93	56	35	91	26	26	52	140	96	236	
Putnam Ave Building													
Kennedy-Longfellow	9	11	20	15	20	35	22	15	37	46	46	92	
King	12	8	20	7	16	23	4	13	17	23	37	60	47% Paid
Morse	23	18	41	14	26	40	21	15	36	58	59	117	53% Free/R
Total	44	37	81	36	62	98	47	43	90	127	142	269	
Rindge Ave Building													
Peabody	14	20	34	28	16	44	36	25	61	78	61	139	59% Paid
Baldwin	27	15	42	24	18	42	25	13	38	76	46	122	41% Free/R
Total	41	35	76	52	34	86	61	38	99	154	107	261	
Cambridge St Building													
King Open	26	17	43	24	15	39	25	13	38	75	45	120	
Cambridgeport	17	15	32	14	14	28	14	7	21	45	36	81	52% Paid
Fletcher Maynard	4	13	17	5	10	15	4	12	16	13	35	48	48% Free/R
OLA Program	3	5	8	1	6	7	2	2	4	6	13	19	
Total	50	50	100	44	45	89	45	34	79	139	129	268	
Amigos	16	15	31	14	12	26	16	11	27	46	38	84	55% Paid 45% Free/R
	209	172		202	188		195	152		606	512		
		381			390			347			1118		

Notes:

No SEI, No OSE self contained students

Current Grades 4,5,6 rolled forward except for the Haggerty where only grades 4 and 5 rolled forward

Grades 4,5 and 6 represent grades 6,7 and 8 for year 2012-2013

Table C: Breakdown of free, reduced, and paid lunch students at each of the upper schools campuses under the revised and adopted Innovation Agenda, based on 2010 enrollment data.