

THE CAMBRIDGE RINDGE AND LATIN SCHOOL



Paula M. Evans, Principal

October 25, 2000

To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Paula Evans, Principal *PE*
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

Re: New Library Site

I know that you are in the midst of making a very difficult decision about the site for the new Cambridge Public Library. I wish to write briefly about several considerations I have about that choice.

Cambridge Rindge and Latin School will be dramatically affected by your choice. On the one hand, immediate access to a state-of-the-art library is appealing. Right now, our students do not use the library during the school day. It is, however, possible to imagine that practice changing. On the other hand, the extraordinary disruption, noise, and safety issues surrounding the building of the library over the next two-three years will severely impede our teaching and learning. And the eventual plant will cramp CRLS and provoke yet additional, very serious safety issues.

Let me speak about the construction. Currently, when groundskeepers arrive during school hours and work with leaf blowers, many of our teachers complain about the level of noise. I have been in their classrooms. It is impossible to teach effectively. I have asked the City not to clear leaves during the school day. I can only imagine the havoc major construction would cause. I worry that the disruption within the building would be constant, frustrating, and very wearing.

I have discussed the architectural plans with CRLS safety specialists. They are terribly concerned about our inability to keep touch with many students in the Arts Building. The new library would effectively wall off hundreds of students at a time from the mainstream of the campus. Additionally, we have no idea how we could provide proper egress in case of fire or other emergency. Both concerns are very serious.

Finally, we are a busy place. Two thousand adolescents and over two-hundred adults move about our building daily. One of the strengths of the current facility

and campus is our ability to use the outdoors at the beginning and end of the day and during our brief lunch hour. We have a bit of breathing space, and it means so much to students and faculty alike. I would hate to see us become more "urbanized" than we already are. The benches, park area, and spaces around the Arts Building are so important to our daily life and make our comings and goings more pleasant and humane.

I am not a citizen of Cambridge, and hope that I have not overstepped my bounds in writing to you. I am grateful to be leading the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. We are working very hard to make this high school a place focussed on teaching and learning within a community of respect. I appreciate your consideration.

Cc: School Committee Members
Superintendent D'Alessandro

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S 403
Letter from Paula Evans, Principal at
Cambridge Rindge and Latin, regarding
the new library site.

Special Meeting for November 16, 2000