

4 Pleasant Place
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
July 21, 1980

Mr. William Lannon
Superintendent of Schools
Cambridge Public Schools
159 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02141

Dear Mr. Lannon:

We have just received notice that our daughter, Katherine Amy Fallow, has been denied reentry into the Open School, by the SPAN Committee. We would like you to formally review this decision and to set up a hearing at which we can be present to discuss this matter.

On May 20th, 1980 we wrote to you after first learning of this problem (see attached letter). It is distressing to us that you neither responded to our letter, nor evidently forwarded it to the SPAN Committee.

Our concerns remain the same:

- (i) What are the guidelines upon which this decision was made?
- (ii) Who are the members of the SPAN Committee and how were they appointed?
- (iii) How does the SPAN Committee have the authority to override the apparent decision of the Open School to keep a child enrolled in its program?
- (iv) Why were we not notified during the 1979-1980 school year that Katherine's previously guaranteed place might not be honored?

To review, Katie has been a member of the Open School since May of 1977. The present difficulty

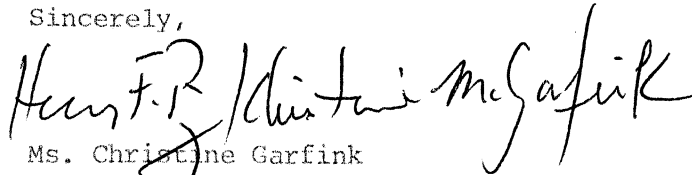
page 2

has arisen because Katie spent the 1979-1980 school year in Silver Spring, Maryland with her father. Before we let her go we were assured that she would be allowed to return to the Open School. You should understand that it is normally stressful for any young person to change school, community and family for a year, and that it is important for there to be continuity of her educational experience upon her return. It appears that she is being penalized for living away for a year, in spite of the fact that this has become common in contemporary American society.

During the period of time that the SPAN Committee met to decide on Katie's place in the Open School we were not notified, nor asked to participate. This is despite the fact that Chris had been an active parent in the Open School. It was only by chance that during an informal conversation with Ms. Penny Peters that we learned that Katie's position was in jeopardy. It at any time during the past school year we had known of this possibility, we would have brought Katie back to Cambridge. We consider it unfair that this decision was made without parent input, especially since parent participation in the Open School is an important part of its functioning.

We expect the courtesy of a prompt reply to this letter, and are available to meet with you at any time prior to August 15th, 1980 to discuss this matter. We can be reached during the day at 426-4607 (Ms. Garfink) or 727-6350 (Mr. Pizer).

Sincerely,



Ms. Christine Garfink
Mr. Harry F. Pizer

cc: Mayor Francis H. Duehay
Cambridge City Council
Ms. Penny Peters
Ms. Alice Wolf
Ms. Lena James
Ms. Sondra Darling
Ms. Muriel Heiberger, Project SPAN

Enclosure

4 Pleasant Place
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
May 20, 1980

William Lannon, Superintendent
Cambridge Public Schools
159 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02141

Dear Mr Lannon:

I had a very distressing conversation on May 19, 1980 with Penny Peters who is the liason between the SPAN Program and the Open School. Ms. Peters indicated that my daughter, Katherine Fallow, would no longer be able to attend the Open School where she has been enrolled since May, 1977.

When we moved to the Boston area in 1977, we specifically settled in Cambridge so that Katie, who has always been in an open classroom, could continue her education in the Open School. When we looked for a home to buy in this area we looked only in Cambridge so that Katie would not have to change schools.

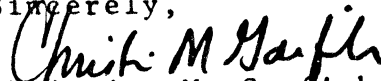
In the fall of 1979, Katie went to live with family in Maryland for the 1979-1980 school year. I have continued my residence in Cambridge during this period. Neither in conversation with Beth Barth in November, 1979, nor in written correspondence with Susan Goldstein in January, 1980 was I informed that Katie would not be able to re-enter the Open School in September, 1980. Frankly, had I known this to be the case I would have had her return to finish up the year at the Open School.

Ms. Peters has informed me that Katie will not be allowed to return to her school. She stated, however, that current enrollees in the Open School will be allowed to remain in order to provide continuity in educational experience for the children.

I would like Katie's continuity of education at the Open School to be preserved. I request that she be allowed to remain in the Open School.

Please send me any documents which explain the regulations under which this redistribution to new schools is being instituted. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,


Christine M. Garfink

Comm. from Ms Christine Garfink and
Harry F. Pizer regarding entrance into
the Open School from the SPAN Committee.

In City Council,

August 4, 1980

*Referred to the
Appeals Board
of
the Cambridge
School Committee.
Sent to Sec'y of School
Comm. 8/5/80 (dl)*