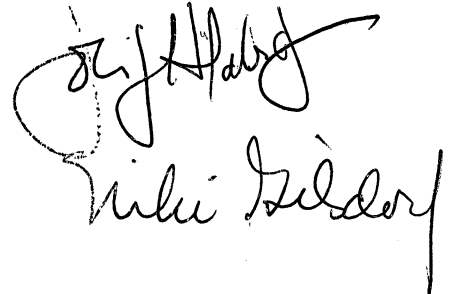


permanently in Cambridge because of the schools in general, and
CRLS in particular. We ask you, as our elected representatives,
not to give us reason to doubt the wisdom of that decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Niki Geldorf". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background. The first part of the signature is more stylized, with a large loop, while the second part is more straightforward.

6.

John Hildebidle
Niki Gilsdorf
42 Cogswell Avenue #1
Cambridge MA 02140

May 5, 1990

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge MA 02139

We write as concerned property-owners/taxpayers, and as the parents of two children in the Cambridge Public Schools, one now in the Academy program at CRLS. We have found the recent discussions of massive cuts in the school budget very troubling.

In the first case, the mere timing of the discussion is most disturbing. We are both familiar with public schools, having taught for some years in Newton. Precisely at the time of year when careful planning must be made for the following school year, Cambridge has deprived its educators of the opportunity to undertake such planning, by suggesting draconian budget cuts, and the abolition of vaguely-defined whole programs.

For some reason, CRLS seems to have been singled out for particularly drastic cuts. The idea that CRLS currently has "excess capacity" is absurd, to anyone who has been at all close to the current situation. It may be that the school can be imagined as having additional capacity, but that can not be dismissed or characterized as "excess." Rather, the administrators and teachers of the school need to be allowed and even encouraged to search for additional opportunities. Especially, matters of school climate and student support need to be given careful and positive attention. One of the reasons why CRLS can be fairly accounted as serving the community is that its program supports the individual needs of a widely-varied student body. And, yes, that costs money.

At the very least, if cuts need to be made, they must be put in place at some reasonable speed, a pace which allows for smooth transitions and careful and effective planning. Simply demanding the removal of teaching positions and programs, immediately, does not take this into account. And if cuts must be made, they must be made equitably, and on well-articulated educational grounds. The discussion to this point has been almost entirely fiscal; matters of curriculum, educational goals, and scheduling have simply not been addressed. Why?

The person most needing support is Mr. Sarasin. He is, after all, a carefully-selected educational professional; he must be allowed to do his job, which is to develop and put into effect a carefully-thought-out plan. He seems to have developed such a plan for a reduction-in-staff of 10 teachers. To demand more than that risks the destruction of a fine secondary-school program.

The long and short of it is that CRLS is a good school -- a school that has earned the admiration even of residents and educators in fashionable suburbs. But it seems now that the school is being dismantled, and for no clear reason except for mindless ledger-balancing. Many of us moved to and settled

Consent Communication #6

5-264

Communication was received from
John Hildebielle and Niki Gilsdorf,
transmitting concern regarding
recent discussions of massive cuts
in the school budget.

In City Council May 13, 1996

Placed on file