



How do you plan to advance STEM education for families in Cambridge? What role do you see for Kendall organizations in that plan?

The responses below are from 16 Cambridge City Council candidates, to a questionnaire circulated by the KSA to all 19 candidates in the summer of 2021.

Burhan Azeem: Cambridge should be a world leader in STEM education. It's in the city's veins. No where else do you walk around to local shops named Darwins or Miracle of Science.

I think we need to really focus on STEM education in K-12, especially as a bridge to connect the kids growing in Cambridge to the high paying STEM jobs offered here.

Tangibly this means investing in exploratory programs for younger kids to get them curious about science and in internships and work programs for CRLS students so they can get opportunities in Cambridge.

Dana Bullister: As I mentioned above, I believe there is untapped potential in promoting public-private partnerships leveraging our city's creative resources toward the public good. A crucial subcategory of these includes educational initiatives. Much like existing educational partnerships among Kendall Square life sciences companies and local public schools, I believe the city can initiate similar programs among local startup, software, and greentech companies, for example. Targeted internship programs connecting local technology companies and startups with public school students can also create educational and mentorship opportunities.

Technology competitions sponsored by local Kendall Square businesses are another way to encourage more participatory learning. Inspired by the Congressional App Challenge, which invites middle and high school students to submit social impact software projects, the city can organize themed challenges that encourage public middle and high schoolers to submit projects in software, greentech, the life sciences, and more to be judged by local professionals in the field. Winners of these challenges can be publicly honored, inspiring others to participate in such events.

Dennis Carlone, incumbent: You are among the stars in Cambridge and greater Boston. Kendall organizations, as the future job generators and knowledge centers, are the key to Cambridge's STEAM programs. It needs to start at the Universal Pre-Kindergarten level and become an integral part of all public schools in the city. There have been positive early starts in this area but it has to become a unified, well- organized approach for it to be truly successful and, equally important, gain public school acceptance.

Robert Eckstut: I believe there has been an overabundance of energy/over-exuberance of joy for anything STEM related. Since not everyone may be familiar with me, it's worth pointing out I

have both an engineering and a computer science background. But the reality is liberal studies, softer sciences, the arts... all are very meaningful. And I do not want STEM education displacing other aspects of education. That said, because I am pushing for a bigger emphasis in our budget with respect to education relative to my peers, plenty will go towards programs that push STEM education.

As far as partnerships within the Kendall organizations: Sure. When our interests align we can be best friends.

[Tonia Hicks](#): The biotech community has already made efforts to bring STEM education to the youth of Cambridge. Several large biotech and pharmaceutical companies have initiated programs that strive to bring practical STEM training to students in the Cambridge and Somerville schools. I'd like to see Kendall-based companies take this a step further and create paid internship programs that allow youth and young adults in Cambridge to get the experience they need to start careers in life science and technology companies. In addition, I'd like to work with Kendall-based companies to create technical apprenticeship-based opportunities for students who may not be college-bound so that they can find meaningful work and jobs by which they can support themselves financially and therefore remain in the community.

[Alanna Mallon](#), incumbent (Vice-Mayor): Too many of our kids grow up in the shadow of Kendall Square thinking that the opportunities it offers are not for them. We need to consciously work to ensure that Kendall Square is an accessible, welcoming place for our kids, not an exclusive opportunity for the lucky few. As someone who has been a long-time mentor in our schools' RSTA program, I have been successful in connecting kids with opportunities in the culinary industry, nonprofit work, and more recently, workforce development opportunities in union jobs. We have all of the infrastructure set up on the City-side through the MSYEP program—where high school students intern through the Mayor's Office, but Kendall Square institutions need to be a part of the conversation. I would like the City and the Kendall Square Association to work more closely to recruit employers that would be willing to hire high school interns to expose them to opportunities in the fields of research and development, biotech, computer science, and more. These opportunities also need to be paid to ensure that the ability to accept a position is not contingent upon the privilege of being able to work for no compensation. Programs like the one in the state of Iowa also last up to two years or a minimum of 2,000 hours and focus on on-the-job training and mentoring. The program would also need a strong diversity, equity, and inclusion component, as too many of our Black and brown kids are excluded from the opportunities that the most innovative square mile in the world has to offer. By bringing our kids into this pipeline early, we can integrate Kendall Square and its institutions into our school communities, and demystify its exclusivity.

[Marc McGovern](#), incumbent: Every year we read an article about those who live in the shadows of Kendall Sq. and yet we still haven't been able to truly solve that problem. The long range plan is universal pre-k, so that every young person receives a high quality early childhood education. We then need a curriculum in our schools that is built for the future and not the past. We are still teaching math in the same sequence as they did in ancient Greece. Maybe it's time to take another look. The skills our young people need to make it in the world today are different than

even 20 years ago. We need to create internship and job programs that are specifically geared toward lower income students. I am excited about the Foundry but if the young people who gain those internships are all middle class, white kids, then we failed. Again, it all comes down to being intentional. Dismantling 400+ years of racist infrastructure doesn't just happen. Kendall needs to build relationships with the community, especially those in the Port, Harington/Wellington and East Cambridge. It is Kendall's job to reach out and earn the trust of the residents, not the residents job to automatically trust Kendall.

Joe McGuirk: While I see the positives of advancing STEM education locally, I am unsure as to how I would advance it. I recognize that this may offer opportunities to our students as they enter the workforce, but I also recognize that some of our students may not have the means or desire for advancing their education after high school. Starting STEM at earlier ages may help, but it is also important to give students the opportunity to succeed even if they do not go to college. But I imagine that apprenticeships and mentoring by our scientific and innovation community would have a very positive impact on students.

Patricia Nolan, incumbent: How many people in Kendall Square, or the city, know that here, today, our high school has only about 20% of our public school eighth graders successfully complete Algebra? In many nearby school districts—Brookline, Belmont, Lexington—and most independent schools—that figure is 80-90%. That disparity is appalling and I want Kendall to immediately address it with us. That shocking difference is the heart of equity—higher expectations. A key role for Kendall organizations is to push us to not only aim higher, but hit a higher target. Too often, the community does not hold us accountable for our results. WE have a laudatory high school graduation rate, yet we have a mediocre college completion rate for low income students and students of color. Or apprenticeship programs. The Biogen lab is a fantastic resource—as is the maker space at Washington Elms. How are they utilized? Do we need more? I beg Kendall organizations to demand more from the city—I beg you to all step up and help us—we need you and the families need you.

As a School Committee Member I advocated for many years to improve the Cambridge Public Schools math education and STEM emphasis, beginning in elementary school. We were not doing our best—kids from all backgrounds were languishing. Although I did a lot to slowly change the culture into one that acknowledged such lapses and took aim at them—the work is not done, and the covid academic slide makes it harder. WE need Kendall to reverse the academic slide—we can do it with your help.

The growing comparisons in wealth and job salary are indicators that our educational system is not effectively preparing all our students for the 21st century job requirements. As City Councilor I can work collaboratively with the school committee members and community groups to tie educational policies with the programs such as the wealth of offerings from MIT and companies in Kendall Square. Thus, the role is to continue to develop and offer wonderful programs AND demand more of the city and our schools.

Sumbul Siddiqui, incumbent (Mayor): I am strongly supportive of Cambridge's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) Initiative as a blueprint for integrating the

community into students' STEAM education. Cambridge is uniquely suited to lead the nation on STEM education--it is the pinnacle of education and industry STEM innovation. We have an obligation to use these resources to prepare our students with the 21st century skills they need to succeed and tackle the challenges we face. The STEAM initiative ensures economic and social barriers do not impact students' ability to get a quality education, helping to prepare a more diverse and representative workforce for our city.

I think we can evaluate the efficacy of the Biogen Foundation STAR Initiative, and work to increase participation and cooperation from the Kendall community to fill any gaps in advancing STEM education.

E. Denise Simmons, incumbent: In some ways, it's maddening that Cambridge is home to "the most innovative square mile on the planet," yet many children and young adults that live just up the street from that square mile feel as if they might as well live on another continent. Efforts have been made to increase STEM education in our schools, projects like the Foundry, and offerings like the JAS Biomedical Career Training Program are absolutely steps in the right direction. But I do think that, as with so many other City efforts, we could benefit by having one department, or one individual, designated as the coordinator of such efforts so that they can gain a better sense of where the gaps are, what groups of people aren't being served or engaged with, where does the outreach need to be strengthened, and so forth. I would like to propose that the City work to establish such a position, and certain the KSA would be a critical partner in helping to focus our efforts in creating this position and in getting the program up and running.

Theodora Skeadas: I recently read that Cambridge has created 45,000 jobs since 1980, and most of those are in Kendall Square, in STEM fields. Clearly, STEM education for families in Cambridge translates to employment opportunities.

As a City Councillor, I will take action to push private institutions, such as Harvard, MIT, and Cambridge-based corporations to create a start-up fund and competition to advance the initiatives of CRLS' graduating students. I will also put a concerted focus on expanding year round youth employment opportunities with the City, something Kendall organizations could play an important role in. Additionally, I will work to grow apprenticeships and vocational training opportunities for students entering the workforce after high school.

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, incumbent: Cambridge should work with STEM institutions and employers to provide opportunities and placements for residents. In doing so, we can build off some of the successes in programs like Cambridge Works, the Possible Project, and the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program that provide training, mentoring, and career placement to residents to expand the pipeline of opportunities that are available to Cambridge residents.

One way to do this would be by creating a Jobs Linkage program, similar to the Affordable Housing Linkage program that Cambridge has currently. With the Affordable Housing Linkage, new commercial development pays a fee per square foot into Cambridge's Affordable Housing

Trust. Cities such as Somerville have an associated Jobs Linkage to ensure that new commercial development leads to training and STEM education programs to ensure that residents have access to the jobs that will be housed in the new developments. It's one approach to funding education and training to ensure that residents have access to well-paying jobs.

Paul Toner: STEM education is essential to equip our young people with the skills to succeed in today's knowledge-based economy. I believe we need to ensure that our schools have the resources to teach STEM and parents have the information necessary to access the wealth of resources in Cambridge. The Kendall Square Association can expand on its current school partnerships by working with students, parents and teachers to expose them to all the wonders of the work being done in the KSA community through internships, externships for teachers, work study opportunities and more. I hope that KSA employees can serve as STEM ambassadors who can engage more of our community members and support them in developing career paths in STEM.

Nicola Williams: STEM Education is important to me to continue to support. The Cambridge Community Foundation report revealed that 50% of our Black and Brown children are underachieving by third grade. This is alarming data. We are lucky to be in a City with such wealth of resources in tech and life sciences. I would like to advance STEM education for families in Cambridge by extending the Mayor's summer jobs program into a year-round fellowship program where students can work 5 hours a week during the school year at local companies, including tech and life sciences companies. Once a month, there would be a workshop that could include topics such as mentoring, job readiness, interviewing, team building, budgeting, resume writing, etc. By engaging employees and companies offering fellowship opportunities are ways for Kendall organizations to be part of this plan.

Quinton Zondervan, incumbent: As outlined in my oped, Cambridge needs to invest in programs like the Young People Project, Universal Pre-K, After school programs, RSTA and others to ensure access to a full education for ALL children. Affluent families have no trouble accessing STEM education opportunities in and near Cambridge. Kendall organizations can deepen their support for YPP and other local efforts to improve educational outcomes for Black students.