

Virtual Special Education & Student Supports Sub-Committee  
Tuesday, April 12, 2022. 6:30 p.m.  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing summer program opportunities within CPS and DHSP (Department of Human Service Programs) and reviewing the policy around after-school programs for students with disabilities.

Sub-Committee Members Present: Member Wilson, Chair; Member Weinstein; Member Rojas

Others Present: Mayor Siddiqui; Dr. Barbara Mullen

Chair Wilson started the meeting at 6:35 p.m. The call of the meeting was read, and Chair Wilson outlined the meeting. Chair Wilson turned the meeting over Dr. Mullen.

Dr. Mullen provided an update on:

- Staffing: three open positions are open/opening- Social and Emotional Learning Director, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Director, and Executive Director of Special Services (The OSS director role is being faded out)
- Extended School Year: IOP team decides for students
- After school programming been listening to DHSP to see what programs are available

Chair Wilson opened the meeting for questions.

- Ms. Farnum asked for clarification on the extended school year being identified by the IOP team and the 11th-month program which is ASD and special start
- Karen Dobak advocated for the criteria around ESY eligibility should be more than academics

Chair Wilson turned the meeting over to other Sub-Committee members for their questions/concerns:

- Member Weinstein asked for clarification on the restructuring and timeframe of the new positions
- Member Wilson asked for the administration to keep the Committee and the public updated

Chair Wilson turned the meeting over to Ms. Farnum on the update of summer program opportunities with DHSP. Ms. Farnum shared an update on DHSP summer programming (the first summer back to typical programming):

- A six-week summer program for kids entering kindergarten (students must have completed JK). The programming is six weeks, not seven due to start/end of school dates.
- Four programs for grades 4 through 8 out of the youth centers
- Camp Rainbow, will be moved to the King Open Complex
- The Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program application is open
- Continued partnership with the pilot of Camp Summit

Member Wilson opened the meeting to questions on DHSP programs:

- Maya Gonzalez asked why Camp Rainbow is shorter than other programs.
- Member Rojas asked the reasoning why we are providing the programs in the same buildings and asked if the same staff will be the same in the morning and the afternoon. Ms. Farnum discussed how they are in a hiring crisis.
- Ms. Ena Valuenza asked for clarification on staffing for nurses for summer programs and her personal experience. Ms. Farnum discussed how they don't have a nurse but they have a health care consultant.

Member Wilson shared that the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program applications are now live (will close on April 29th): [Click here](#)

Ms. Dobak expressed her concerns that the city needs to ensure that these programs are open to students with all needs.

Danielle Jones McLaughlin asked for clarification on funding for the summer programs. Ms. Farnum discussed how in the City their multitudes of after-school programs/summer programs, then some non-profits also run summer programs.

Member Wilson advocated for universal after-school.

Member Wilson moved the meeting for a discussion on [Cambridge's Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities](#)

- Ms. Farnum discussed how it was initially written by the Kid's Council in 2004
- They were unsure why the date on the policy was May 2018 and whether it was adopted
- This proposal was being developed at the same time as the inclusion initiative in 2005

Member Wilson will investigate whether this was adopted and why there was a lag from 2005 to 2018. Member Wilson asked Ms. Farnum about current city inclusionary programs. Ms. Farnum emphasized that the priority is to include students with disabilities and explore in addition to inclusionary programs and different considerations that need to be, there is an assessment process whether a child will need support to access the group settings.

Maya Gonzalez advocated for more School Department and City collaboration. Member Wilson concurred and discussed thinking about how we can intentionally do this work and recognizing we are in a hiring freeze but that's not an excuse.

Member Wilson opened the meeting to educators and other Sub-Committee members on their thoughts.

- Vivian Pales also advocated for more collaboration between the School Department and the City
- Ms. Gonzalez discussed how the hiring freeze can't be an excuse/we want action
- Ms. Gosselin expressed her concern about the evaluation process of students who need special services
- Member Weinstein advocated for universal after-school, he discussed [the birth to 3rd](#) program as a model of partnership between the School Department and the City maybe around recruitment
- Zuleka Queen-Postell echoed Ms. Gosselin's sentiments on the evaluation process differences between school time and after school time programs
- Ms. Dobak discussed how there should be more people in the city doing the evaluations.

Chair Wilson shared that the next meeting of this Sub-Committee will be focused on reading. Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.