cambridge 2001

City of Cambridge • Executive Department

Robert W. Healy, City Manager *Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

May 4, 2001

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Enclosed for your information please find a report prepared by Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, regarding Revised Kid's Council Budget Goals.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/dls
Enclosure

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager *Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

TO: Mayor Anthony Galluccio & Members of the Kids' Council

FROM: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

RE: Revised Kids' Council Budget Goals

DATE: May 4, 2001

At the March 15, 2001 Kids' Council meeting there was a discussion regarding budget goals for the Kids' Council for the upcoming fiscal year that had been drafted by a sub-committee. I indicated at that time that although the preparation of the '02 budget was nearly complete that I would review the document and provide a response.

I believe it is important to consider the proposed draft in the context of the extensive and thoughtful planning around the Agenda for Children in which the Kids' Council has been heavily engaged for the past few years. The Kids' Council has adopted an organizational structure to support and carry out the work of the Agenda which includes a Steering Committee to direct the work of the Agenda and two advisory committees, one for each of the goals, to be made up of experts in the field, providers of service, and parents. The Steering Committee has been actively working over the past several months to hire the coordinators who will lead the work around each of the two goals. As of this week, both coordinators are in place and ready to begin their work.

The advisory committees, which the two coordinators are working with the Steering Committee to establish, will be charged with reviewing and prioritizing the detailed action plans which were developed over the course of a year and which were reviewed and accepted by the Kids' Council some time ago. This was the structure, which the Kids' Council recommended to me in the fall.

Throughout the last year, the Community Engagement Planning Committee and the eight community-based partners whose work they oversee have been maintaining communication with diverse groups within our community regarding the two goal areas of the Agenda. The community-based partners will be working with the two coordinators over the next several months informing their work and helping make connections within their communities. At the same time, the Community Engagement Planning Committee, working with the Steering Committee and the Coordinators will be developing a blueprint for the next phase of community engagement for the Agenda.

The above described work has been supported by significant budget allocations which I recommended in the FY '00 and '01 budgets as well as funding from the Cambridge Health Alliance. During the planning phase, I understood the importance of moving ahead with implementation activities and have also, over the past two years, recommended $400,000 per year to support the pilot Harrington Extended Day Program.

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In the FY '02 budget you will see a continuation of funding at the $240,000 level for the Agenda as it moves into implementation as well as $400,000 for continuation of the pilot extended day program at the Harrington School. In addition, the Cambridge Health Alliance has committed $100,000 of its funds to support the work of the Agenda. The City and Health Alliance funds will enable the Coordinators to begin implementation of the Action Plans, will support continued community engagement work, will provide for evaluation of the work and for development of a marketing strategy for the Agenda.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Kids' Council's draft budget goals include many items that are currently planned for implementation in the upcoming fiscal year or are already underway including:

- *Access to the City's tuition reimbursement benefit by part time employees.* Such an effort was piloted this year and is being evaluated for possible continuation in the upcoming year.
- *A doubling of the professional development fund for municipal child care workers.*
- *Receipt of a 21st Century Learning Center grant by the School Department for the Fletcher Maynard Academy in collaboration with the Department of Human Services.* The grant will support collaborative planning in developing a new model for extended day programming.
- *Development of a comprehensive services database, including after-school offerings which will be accessible to providers of children and youth programs as well as parents and the general public.* Database development is underway and an advisory committee is being established to provide input and guidance.
- *Implementation of a $75,000 program enhancement fund by the Cambridge Community Foundation for grants for after-school child care programs.* An RFP has been sent out to programs with implementation of the grants targeted for the fall.
- *Implementation of a collaboration between the Child Care Resource Center and others with funding from the Cambridge Community Foundation to address the shortage of licensed infant/toddler care through recruitment, training and support.*
- *Distribution of books through the Cambridge Health Alliance primary care network.*
- *Development of a marketing strategy for the Agenda for Children.*

I understand that the Kids' Council will soon be meeting with individuals experienced in engaging youth to increase their participation in advisory and governing boards. Also, I am very aware of the possibility of a significant loss of funding for the North Cambridge Center for Families and I do not think it prudent to consider a recommendation for funding for an additional center until that matter is resolved.

I have attempted to address the goals laid out in the Kids' Council's draft document as specifically as possible. I believe that it is most important that the just-hired Agenda for Children coordinators, who I know to be well qualified for their respective roles, be given an opportunity to demonstrate what can be done with the wide array of resources available to them. I expect that they will do their work with their Advisory Committees, the Steering Committee and the Kids' Council this year, using the Action Plans for Literacy and Supervised Activities as their blueprint. There are significant financial resources available to them, many of them referenced above. Most importantly, there is a very eager community of people ready to work with them to address the goals that *all Cambridge children and their families will be able to read* and *that all Cambridge children and youth will have access to safe, stimulating, nurturing and healthful out-of-school time activities*.

The budget that supports the work of the Kids' Council actually comes from many sources in addition to the specific cost center of the Kids' Council. Certainly the work and activities of the Kids' Council utilize more funding beyond that of the Executive Director's position and a modest $500 operating budget. For example, many of the food and child care costs involved in carrying out Kids' Council meetings have been supported by funds from the Department of Human Services general operating budget. Also, printing, copying, postage, telephone and a computer are examples of operating costs absorbed by the Department of Human Services. The Agenda for Children budget has also supported many related expenses this past year. The Cambridge Health Alliance will be covering the cost involved in having minutes taken at Kids' Council meetings. A tuition reimbursement benefit of $1000 continues to be available to all full time employees of the City and I have included a new $1500 allocation in the Kids' Council FY'02 budget to support the attendance of the Executive Director at a relevant national conference. Until we have had a year of experience working with the two new coordinators, I am not prepared to recommend funding for an additional support position. As has been the case for some time, the Executive Director is able to access project administrative support from the Department of Human Services and will continue to be able to do so.

cc: City Councilors

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