

To the Members of the Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Councilors:

RE: Community Schools Budget Needs

To bring you up-to-date on our budget appeal process, we wish to inform the City Council that two of our representatives met with three members of the administration of the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) on January 11, 2000 at Jill Herold's request. The minutes of that meeting are attached.

In recent months, the Citywide Community Council has been petitioning DHSP for operating budget increases with the hope that these budget increases will be included in the DHSP annual budget message to the City Council for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Citywide Community Council feels that the fact that Community Schools have not had a budget increase in 30 years is justification enough to ask for more operating budget money beginning in the next fiscal year. However, DHSP administrators feel that not having a budget increase in 30 years is not reason enough to approve more monies and have asked us to justify the need for this request for more operating funds through a DHSP-run needs assessment/planning process with outside consultants ("facilitators"). (See the minutes of the 11/18/99 meeting sent to City Council Members in December, 1999, also attached.)

At a meeting on November 18, 1999, many members of the Citywide Community Council, program patrons, and parents eloquently and with fervor presented the case for a budget increase for Community Schools. Yet, the DHSP administration was not convinced. (This meeting was attended by a member of the City Council, Acting Mayor Kenneth Reeves, who at the time was also the chair of the Subcommittee on Community and Youth for the City.)

Thus, as a follow up to the 11/18/99 meeting, the chair of the Citywide Community Council, Carolyn Shipley, contacted Jill Herold and offered to poll the attendees of that meeting as well as other Citywide Community Council members, who were unable to be present at the 11/18/99 meeting, in order to establish or confirm their positions on their Community School budget requests and other issues raised at the 11/18/99 meeting. Her findings were presented to DHSP administrators at the 1/11/00 meeting.

At the meeting on 1/11/00, the administration of DHSP agreed with Carolyn Shipley's suggestion that the Citywide Community Council could undertake its own strategic planning process in order to formalize a plan that will propose creative means of safely meeting the afterschool enrichment needs of the City's schoolchildren and especially to formulate methods for reaching unserved populations.

We, the undersigned, request a meeting before the City Council in order to present our petitions for the upcoming fiscal year. For your edification, you will find attached to the minutes of the 1/11/00 meeting our list of the 8 major needs of the Community Schools without which Community Schools will be unable to carry out the review and planning process and implement programs required to safely serve Cambridge children, families, adults and seniors and new population groups.

Michele Borden, George Bossarte, Peg Callahan, Dot Cherico, Barbara Hayes, Claire Koen, Carolyn Rodriques, Carolyn Shipley

January 18, 2000

TO: Jill Herold, Ellen Semonoff, Eileen Keegan

FROM: Carolyn Shipley, Chair – Citywide Community School Council

RE: Follow up on 1/11/00 Meeting

Thank you for meeting with Peg Callahan and me on 1/11/00 and affording us the opportunity to convey to you the decisions of the members of the Citywide Community Council regarding a department-run planning process/needs assessment as proposed by you in the November 18, 1999 meeting at the DHSP office.

As mentioned in my December 15, 1999 memo forwarding the minutes of the 11/18/99 meeting, every Neighborhood Council member and chairperson polled except one, clearly stated an opposition to going through another planning process on top of the recently completed out of school time needs assessment planning process.

Every Neighborhood Council reminded me that they go through a program review/planning process on a quarterly basis in order to put together a program for each of the three annual sessions and the summer programs and that this procedure has been followed for many years. Each Community School Program Director confers with the individual members of his or her respective Neighborhood Council and the Council Chair in order to identify changing or evolving needs. In addition, the Community School Program Directors, on an almost daily basis, receive input from parents and users of their programs as to their wishes for new programs or changes to existing program offerings.

Nonetheless, as we agreed in our January 11, 2000 meeting, I will ask the Citywide Community Council if it would be willing to conduct its own survey in order to identify potential gaps in service or unserved populations for which Community Schools could be prepared to design programs given that the necessary resources are available. I will put this on the agenda for the next meeting of the Citywide Community Council. Early indications are that the community school website is reaching some of those that are unserved (www.communityschls.com).

More importantly, I wish to reiterate my request, on behalf of the Citywide Community Council, that you present the list of needs (identified by the Citywide Community Council at meetings in October, 1999) to the City Manager with a strong request that he give serious consideration to granting those requests. The Citywide Community Council hopes that you will include our list of needs in your upcoming budget. The list of eight items includes needed resources as well as budget increases, all of which were identified after much discussion and careful consideration by the Citywide Community Council. We ask this in view of the fact that the City has not allocated any increase in the operating or overhead budgets for Community Schools in over twenty years. I attach that list to this memo with the comment that the item about filling the Harrington Community School position no longer applies since that is in process.

Without these budget increases, Community Schools will find it next to impossible to plan and carry out any revised or expanded plans for unserved populations for the next decade as you requested.

Thank you.

Attachment

Dear Friend of Community Schools:

Community Schools are looking to the future and want to enlist your support.

Community Schools have not had an increase in operating funds to support their programs in 30 years. Inflation has severely cut into the purchasing power of the budgeted funds in those years.

Please review the fact sheet on the reverse. There is also a longer history of Community Schools, which I hope you will read.

**THE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS HAVE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING
NEEDS FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

- Increased operating budget.
- Increased salary structure for the Program Directors.
- The addition of a Program Assistant at each Community School site.
- ~~Hiring a Community School Program Director to fill vacancy at the Harrington site.~~
- A bookkeeper-at-large to assist with financial management and a public relations/marketing coordinator-at-large to aid program directors with the production of brochures and other collaterals.
- More frequent publication and wider distribution of the Human Services Resource Guide which lists Community School and Youth Center Programs, as well as other Human Services programs.
- Transportation for children living far from the Community School.
- Suitable space and facilities to run their programs.
- Productivity tools, such as computers, printers, internet access, photocopiers.

Thank you for your attention to the above.

Carolyn Shipley, Chair-
Cambridge Citywide Council (617) 573-4899
On behalf and with the coordination of the
Citywide Council

Visit our website at:
www.communityschls.com

**MINUTES OF MEETING
ON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
PROPOSED NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

November 18, 1999

At the request of Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, a meeting of Community School Program Directors, neighborhood council chairs and members, and interested members of the public was convened on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. on November 18, 1999, at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts in the DHSP conference room.

A needs assessment by an outside facilitator had been suggested by Jill Herold in response to recent requests for more program funding for the Community School program and for that reason this meeting was called.

The meeting was chaired by Jill Herold, Ellen Semonoff, Deputy Assistant Manager for Human Services, and Eileen Keegan, Division Head, Community and Youth Services. Also in attendance were Roz Shoy and Judy Bibbons, program managers of the thirteen Community Schools. Eileen asked the attendees to identify themselves and the Community School with which they are associated and to sign the attendance list being circulated.

Twenty-six attendees signed the attendance list. In addition, City Councilor Kenneth Reeves, Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Community and Youth was in attendance and Carolyn Shipley, Chair of the Citywide Community School Council.

As they identified themselves and the neighborhood they represent, several expressed their feelings of support for community schools or mentioned a particular community school issue and how the City, in their view, was not supporting them. Some mentioned the importance of Community School programs promoting social adjustment, academic success and self-esteem, and the prevention of drug abuse and other problems. Carolyn Shipley mentioned that indeed Community Schools are the embodiment of the African concept: "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child."

Carolyn Shipley distributed material on the history of Community Schools including a 2-sided document containing a Fact Sheet about Community Schools and a list of needs identified by members of a number of neighborhood councils in two meetings in the weeks preceding the November 18th meeting. In addition, she mentioned that she had created a web page for Cambridge Community Schools and invited everyone to log on and check it out at: <http://www.communityschls.com> (See attachments.)

Carolyn pointed out the items on the *History* that are marked with asterisks, noting that every such item describes Community School efforts that are done in collaboration with their host school or with some other City direct service agency or private direct service entities. Carolyn said she would like to see more collaboration and cooperation between various entities for the hosting of programs that benefit children, pre-teens, families, and seniors.

After the attendees introduced themselves, Jill Herold introduced herself and mentioned her reasons for calling the meeting and gave some of the history of her association with community schools. Ms. Herold stated that she fully supports the community school concept and our Community School

program. She stressed that any program that provides summer camp for 1,000 children [Community Schools] is invaluable to the City and no one intends to close programs of such value. Ms. Herold asked those in attendance if they would go through a needs assessment process of community schools with her.

Decia Goodwin, Graham & Parks Community Council, spoke strongly against another needs assessment, pointing out that many community school representatives met last year with the facilitators--after being invited by DHSP to do so--who ostensibly were looking into afterschool (called out-of-school time) programming needs. Those facilitators ignored what community schools representatives said. Decia also felt that DHSP did not respect or value our opinions because it is obvious everything we asked for was ignored in the consultants' report and that DHSP pursued its own agenda ultimately. She felt there would be no guarantee that our voices would be heard a second time. Another needs assessment, in her opinion, would not only be redundant, but also an additional burden on us, as well as a waste of money that could better be used for community school programs.

Carolyn Rodriques, a member of the Fitzgerald Neighborhood Council, spoke against a needs assessment by explaining she became involved with the Fitzgerald Community School in order to accommodate the evolving needs in her community for afterschool sports and work to meet the changing needs. Thus, she sees the Fitzgerald Community School as a viable, relevant program. She felt that a program that is in existence for over 30 years is obviously successful in meeting the needs of its community, that that--30 successful years--is its own needs assessment report. She said that the money that would be spent on a consultant would be better spent on community schools to supplement their meager \$5,000 annual operating budget. (This sentiment was repeated by several other speakers among the attendees during the course of the evening.)

Some of the attendees then brought up issues they saw affecting their community schools. Notable issues were the almost-free extended day programs such as exist at the Maynard, Kennedy--in their second year, and Fletcher (in its third year) for a nominal fee of \$50/year, instituted by the DHSP and the School Department, which compete with the Community Schools for students. Concern was expressed about the length of time it is taking to fill the four Program Director vacancies: Maynard, Cambridgeport, Haggerty, and Harrington. When asked if the Harrington position would be filled, Jill Herold answered that she definitely intends to fill the position but first wants to do a needs assessment for the Harrington Community School programs. Ms. Herold mentioned, in response to a question about the Community School budget, that it was approximately \$1 million, but did not explain from what sources the funds came or fully how they are spent.

Some discussion centered on the extended day "pilot" program at Harrington and the needs assessment for afterschool childcare that took place last year.

Mary Ann Witham pointed out to Jill Herold that the Harrington Neighborhood Council was unprepared for their August 4th meeting with her because she (Jill Herold) called the council members the evening before (August 3rd) and asked them to meet with her the next day on the subject of the new extended day program at the Harrington and its effect on their community school programs. Mary Ann felt that such short notice showed a lack of respect to the members and an absence of concern about the Harrington Community School programs. Because of the shortness of the notice, the council was unable to respond to Jill's request for a needs assessment of the Harrington Community School program.

Barbara Hayes, Chairperson of Maynard Neighborhood Council, complained that the institution by DHSP of a free (grant-funded) extended day program at the Maynard had the effect of decimating the community schools' enrichment programs for children because the Maynard Community School could

not compete with a free program. She stated that it seemed that such actions by DHSP administration are designed to erode and ultimately end community school programs, especially the Maynard program.

Decia Goodwin voiced her opinion of the unfairness of the discrepancy between the salaries paid the heads of the extended day program versus the salaries of the program directors of Community School programs. She felt that the lower salaries showed a lack of respect for Community School program directors.

Michele Borden, King Neighborhood Council, asked Jill Herold if she was trying to save Community Schools or destroy them.

Jill Herold responded that she was not the person driving the trend toward free extended day programs; that the School Department was. At another time during the evening, when asked about the Harrington Extended Day program, Ms. Herold also stated that she was not the driver of that effort that it, too, was a School Department initiative.

Maria Freddura, a parent of 7, who enrolls her children in the Fletcher Community School programs, said there was a need for more programming such as the community school programs, not less as well as need for coordination of programming citywide to avoid redundancy. She saw the Area Four Youth Center as failing to meet the needs of all the children in Area 4 because of it being divided along race lines. She continued that the Area 4 Youth Center is underutilized in her opinion because other groups do not feel welcome and the school department uses it during the day. Ms. Freddura was against another needs assessment because she felt that community schools were meeting the changing needs of the community and that such a needs assessment was a waste of money that could be better spent on the community schools.

Julia Perez, who runs successful, grant-funded programs that address gender issues for children, praised the Fletcher Community School and its staff for their hard work and spirit of collaboration with the Fletcher School community and other programs in the community. She collaborates with Fletcher Community School. Ms. Perez asked Jill why does she want to reinvent the wheel. She said that the City is duplicating the Community School programs which have been around for 30 years and are highly successful by placing extended day programs in the Fletcher (Danforth Grant), Maynard, and Kennedy, which add to the responsibilities of the Community School Programs Directors but take revenue and students away from those three Community Schools. She saw these extended day programs as being a waste of tax payers' money. She said DHSP should focus on the Community School program, which has a long history of success in the City, instead of starting new similar programs which, apart from being redundant, only serve to fractionalize and polarize the City.

Pat Daley told how important Community Schools were, in her experience, in preventing pre-teens and teens from making wrong choices. She told how several of her former students came up to her at a funeral recently to thank her for her guidance and example. They told her that community schools kept them away from crime.

Discussion around the problems the Community Schools have had to cope with over the last 10 - 20 years took over an hour of meeting time. At 9:10 p.m. (ten minutes after the scheduled end of the meeting) Roz Shoy, Community School Program Director, suggested that the meeting be concluded at 9:30 p.m.

At this point, City Councilor Kenneth Reeves spoke up saying he had to leave the meeting, but wanted to comment on a few of his observations of the discussion. Councilor Reeves spoke of the importance of early intervention programs for children such as the community school programs and youth centers. He stated that it was his view that the City should do all it can to help its children and youth succeed in life. He gave an example of a young man, a senior at the high school, who ranked in the top 1/3 of his class with an SAT score under 1,000. As his graduation day approached, he did not have any idea of what college he would attend or how he would finance such an education. If this student was above the average in his class and was not succeeding, how, Councilor Reeves asked, were the students below him in rank doing academically and what were their prospects for college? In his view, any program (such as Community Schools) that helps students succeed is indispensable.

Councilor Reeves addressed the fund-raising effort by the Community Schools and their councils and supporters that took place in 1992 (see the attached History) in response to DHSP's demand that Community Schools pay back \$10,000 shortfall in the DHSP budget for community schools. He said that the community schools should never have been asked to raise \$10,000 when the City had a large cash surplus. He felt the demand was unfair and unwarranted. He praised the work of the community schools and what they do on such a small operating budget (\$5,000 each community school). He said that Community Schools would no longer have to scrape by with only a \$5,000 operating budget.

Discussion had not yet focused on the proposed needs assessment by an outside consultant as proposed by Jill Herold. Earlier in the evening, Ms. Herold asked the attendees if they would go through a process with her – the process of bringing in an outside facilitator to do a needs assessment similar to the needs assessments done for out-of-school time last year and the youth centers. Several attendees addressed the subject. Every community school supporter who spoke up was against a needs assessment, seeing it as extraneous and redundant. Extraneous, since they have already prepared a list of community school needs (distributed at the meeting) and redundant because community residents spoke with the facilitators of the assessment of out-of-school time (afterschool) needs last year (out of which the extended day pilot program was initiated) and expressed their needs at that time. Most felt that those facilitators ignored their views about afterschool programming needs.

Carolyn Shipley told the group that she had spoken with two city councilors who felt that if it will take a needs assessment to get money out of the City Manager, then go with the needs assessment. Eileen Bacci also voiced the same sentiment. Their comments apparently failed to convince some of those who were opposed to such a needs assessment.

Ellen Semonoff pointed out that the needs assessment could be looked upon as a tool that would provide a strategic plan for community schools which would highlight Community School responsibilities that could be done by other City entities. Earlier in the meeting, Jill Herold pointed out that the City youth centers now serve children from 9 to 19 rather than 10 to 18 as in past years.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Consnet Communicaiton #6 295

A communication was received from
the Cambirdge Citywide Council,
transmitting documetns relative to
the Communitcy Schools budget needs.

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In City Council February X, 2000

PLACED ON FILE