

community engagement and the continued planning process includes significant opportunities for community dialogue and input.

With the selection of the two goals by the Kids' Council, the focused planning process continues. An Action Team is being formed for each goal and a Community Engagement Working Group was formed to oversee the community engagement effort for the goals. The Action Teams will examine the inventory of existing services and programs, consider data and research about best practices, look at program gaps, establish measurable objectives, prioritize objectives, and develop evaluation criteria. The Action Teams will include academic and programmatic experts, City and agency staff, community providers and parents. During the planning process, the Community Engagement Working Group will oversee several sets of focus groups with community residents to allow for additional community input and will oversee the work of community providers in organizing community residents to engage with the Agenda for Children. The planning process represents an ongoing effort to synthesize the different types of expertise from the community, the academics and the program developers, and the charge to the Action Teams is to use this expertise to develop plans that will achieve measurable results. The Action Team Planning Process will produce implementation plans that will form the basis of fundraising and budget requests for FY2001.

There are many current and new initiatives in the proposed FY2000 budget designed to further the two goals. For example, within the School Department's proposed budget are several initiatives focused on improving children's reading: the Reading Recovery Program, an intensive intervention program for first grade students identified as "at risk" in reading and writing; expansion of the Early Literacy Initiative Project from two schools to three; the assignment of Reading Specialists to teaching teams working with Grade 9 students in core areas of Language Arts and History/Social Sciences, and a new sequence of courses at CRLS called "English Foundations." Supporting the two goals in the Department of Human Service Programs' proposed budget, there are significant increases for the City's youth centers, two new pre-school programs and other initiatives to promote children's and families' reading in the department's pre-school and after-school programs and at the Community Learning Center. The Library has additional initiatives directed towards family literacy including outreach by the Library to housing developments and health clinics with the goal of building connections with families who are not traditional library users and services to family child care providers through the Family Day Care Mobile Library Project.

This budget proposal, however, is for support of the ongoing Agenda for Children planning and community engagement process and for two collaborative program initiatives that are ready for implementation in FY2000. Specifically, I am proposing funding for the Agenda for Children in four areas:

First, the School Department and the Department of Human Service Programs have been working with a task force and a consultant to develop a model for a collaborative extended day program that will support the academic program of the school day and meet the needs of families for supervised activities for their children in a stimulating and

enriching environment. While there is an extensive amount of work that needs to be done in refining (and in some redesigning of) the model, the two departments are eager to develop for September a pilot extended day program. The departments are proposing that the pilot be developed at the Harrington School and the Frisoli Youth Center for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The rationale for selection of Harrington/Frisoli includes many different considerations:

- The co-location of the School, the Youth Center and the Branch Library, together with extensive open space and playing fields, maximizes the opportunities for collaborative program development and expands the physical space for program operation.
- The School has a strong community base as well as several existing Human Services programs that currently provide after-school and vacation programming for children and youth.
- Of the student population served by the Harrington School, 68% receive free or reduced price lunch (the highest rate in the district); 53% are students whose home language is not English and 23% are students who receive special education services.
- There is a significant opportunity for academic improvement for Harrington school students as indicated by their Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results. Results indicate that at both grade 4 and grade 8, and in all three areas (English/Language Arts, Math, Science), the number and proportion of students requiring academic assistance was among the highest in the district in 1998-99.

I am proposing that \$400,000 be allocated for the pilot extended day program. The pilot implementation will be designed and developed jointly by the departments in collaboration with the Harrington School community with implementation of significant portions of the program to begin in September.

Second, I am proposing funding of a family literacy initiative from the Cambridge Family Literacy Collaborative, the group that has annually organized Cambridge's Family Fun Day at City Hall to support family literacy. The group is made up of over 50 individuals representing the School Department, the Library, the Department of Human Service Programs, social services agencies, universities and colleges, businesses and community based organizations working to enhance family literacy. The \$25,000 will be used to support the Family Literacy Collaborative's Public Awareness Campaign including production and distribution of written materials and videos in several languages as well as support for the ongoing work of the Collaborative.

Third, I am proposing \$15,000 for the operational costs of the Agenda for Children planning process for FY2000. The funds will cover the Action Team costs in planning,

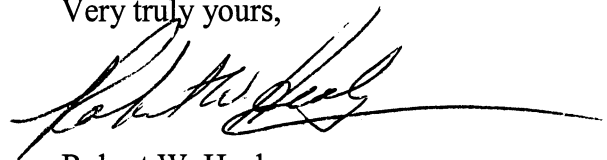
data analysis, meeting expenses, mailings and reproduction. These are the costs over and above the continuing contributions of the lead departments to these expenses.

Fourth, I am proposing funding of \$95,000 for the Community Engagement Process that will be overseen by the Executive Director of the Kids' Council (who is co-chair of the Community Engagement Working Group). As described above, a critical element of the Agenda for Children is the broad engagement of the community in the work of the Agenda. For the City to achieve measurable results in each of the two goals, the plans and the programs developed need to be accessible and appropriate to the needs of all our City's families. The funding for community engagement will support the work of the Community Engagement Working Group in sponsoring focus groups to inform the work of the Action Teams and will be used to contract with community-based agencies for organizers who will work with the diverse constituencies represented in the City's neighborhoods. An open RFP process will be used to solicit community-based organizations to provide the contracted services. Each organization would be responsible for disseminating information about the Agenda for Children, for engaging families in the planning and programs, for providing feedback to the project about the needs of families, and for ensuring that a continuous communication link exists between project planners and the communities the organizations are serving. The Executive Director of the Kids' Council will provide the oversight of the community-based organizations' work and work with the Kids' Council and the lead departments in the oversight of the Agenda project.

In addition to the \$535,000 being proposed above for FY2000 for the Agenda for Children, the Cambridge Health Alliance has committed \$100,000 for support of the work of the Agenda for Children. The \$100,000 will be used for: staff support for the Agenda for Children Process (\$20,000); development and implementation of a communications plan for the Agenda (\$20,000); technical assistance and facilitation (\$35,000); and for additional programmatic initiatives for literacy (\$25,000).

I am proposing that the appropriation request be referred to the Finance Committee for hearing during the Budget Process.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

**PROPOSED BUDGET FOR AGENDA FOR CHILDREN
IMPLEMENTATION AND EXTENDED DAY PILOT**

CITY

Extended Day Pilot	\$400,000
Community Engagement Process	\$ 95,000
Family Literacy Initiative	\$ 25,000
Operating Cost for Agenda Implementation Planning	\$ 15,000
	<u>\$535,000</u>

CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE

Additional Literacy Initiative	\$ 25,000
Communications & Public Awareness Campaign	\$ 20,000
Staff Support to Agenda Implementation	\$ 20,000
Technical Assistance & Facilitation	\$ 35,000
	<u>\$100,000</u>



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9.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

April 12, 1999

To The Honorable, The City Council:

RE: Budget Request for Agenda for Children for FY2000

As you know, the Agenda for Children is a major City initiative to bring together government agencies, community based organizations, businesses and residents to develop and implement a plan to improve the lives of children. Under the sponsorship of the Kids' Council, the Agenda for Children launched an extensive process to select a small number of goals for collective action to enhance the opportunities for all of the City's children to be successful in school, to be healthy and to live in strong supportive communities. Dozens of community meetings were held in churches, community centers, housing developments, schools and other locations in the City's neighborhoods, with a number of meetings conducted in languages other than English. Over 600 residents participated in the meetings to explain what they saw as the key issues facing families and children in the City.

From the analysis of the community data, staff developed nine potential goals for consideration by the Kids' Council. At a series of meetings in the fall and winter of 1998, the Kids' Council examined demographic data and research findings along with the results of the community meetings. Using all of these sources to inform their decision making, the Kids' Council selected two of the nine goals for priority action: (1) Children and their families will be able to read; and (2) Children and youth will have access to supervised activities in nurturing and safe environments.

Cambridge has enormous resources directed to meeting the needs of children and youth both through City government efforts and in the non-profit sector. But there are two features of the Agenda for Children that differentiate it from other City efforts. The first is the unprecedented level of collaboration between City departments and agencies, principally the School Department, the Department of Human Service Programs, the Police Department, the Cambridge Health Alliance and more recently the Library. Although there have been past collaborations on individual projects or programs, there has not previously been an effort of this scope to collaborate on planning and ultimately on program development. The second feature is the ongoing commitment to engage community residents and providers in the planning and implementation process. The Kids' Council purposely selected goals that would lend themselves to extensive

Consent Agenda #9

65F

Relative to a budget request
for Agenda for Children for
FY2000.

In City Council April 12, 1999

Referred to

Finance Committee