

Cambridge Human Services Commission
Minutes of Meeting 3/14/2013
5:30 – 7:30pm
Citywide Senior Center
806 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge

Commissioners present: Christine Elow, Katharine Thomas, Ayse Atasoylu, Kati LaBraico, Christopher Hall

Regrets: Lori Likis, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill, Khari Milner

DHSP staff: Ellen Semonoff, Janice Alger, Jolyon Cowan, Jose Soares (recorder)

Presenter: Bucky O'Hare, Program Manager at the King Open Extended Day (KOED)

Bucky O'Hare began his presentation saying that he has been the Program Manager of the King Open Extended Day (KOED) for six years. Prior to that position, he was the Assistant Director of the Dorchester House Program. He began his career in education as a music teacher and Special Education teacher, and he still plays in his spare time in a band as a semi-professional musician.

The KOED is a unique collaboration between the Cambridge School Department and the City's Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) because it is so deeply imbedded in the King Open School community, and it reflects the school's mission and philosophy. Additionally, KOED is the Department's only after school program that only enrolls children from the public school at which it is based.

The KOED program opened in September 1999, first as part of the Harrington School. The Harrington Extended Day Program was created as a pilot program offering on-site support to the students of the Harrington School. In 2003, as part of a city-wide school consolidation, the Amigos program moved to the Harrington School and the extended day program was named the King Open Extended Day. The new program's second director was Daniel Weinstock, who was initially a teacher at the Harrington School. Daniel Weinstock continues to work as a consultant for the Department for its Agenda for Children Out of School Time program.

The KOED program uses Project Based Learning units, which are social and academic activities that build skills, competencies and culminate in the students presenting a final project. The KOED currently has an enrollment of 121 King Open students, who are in Kindergarten through 6th grade. For each group of 15-25 children there is a team of one full time Head Teacher and one part-time Assistant Teacher. Again, KOED is strongly embedded in the King Open School. In fact its teachers often work as de facto liaisons between parents and the School as they see the parents so often. To strengthen this sense of family engagement, the KOED program arranges pot luck dinners and provides workshops to families on parenting skills and childhood development.

Furthermore, KOED Head Teachers participate in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, run literacy groups, participate in parent conferences, and support school recess and lunch. Staff assist with homework, for between ½ an hour and an hour daily. The program requires students to be enrolled at

least two days per week to maintain a sense of continuity. Teachers will call parents if children are absent. Most students stay for at least two to three years. Every Thursday, the KOED team engages in one hour of professional development. KOED uses the school's classrooms, gym, cafeteria, auditorium, computer lab, library, and recess area, and after 4pm each day, the program has access to the classrooms. For the last three years, KOED has taken on two expressive arts therapy interns from Lesley University who facilitate play sessions and small play groups for the children's social and emotional growth.

KOED is license exempt by the Department of Early Education and Care as it is considered a school based program of the King Open. All front line staff are employees of the DHSP with the exception of Bucky O'Hare who is the only Cambridge School Department employee; however, Bucky reports to both the King Open School and DHSP.

The program starts the first day of school in September and ends the last day of school in June. It is open at school dismissal at 2:45pm and closes at 6pm. During school vacation weeks, KOED is open from 8am to 5:30pm.

For more information on the program and the presentation please see the attached handout, which formed the basis of Bucky's presentation.

Ellen Semonoff then stated that because of the federal sequestration, it is still unclear how big the cut to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will be. As the City has some contingency funds from previous years, the City might be able to make up the shortfall and to fund CDBG programs at last year's level for its next fiscal year, FY 2014.

The next Human Services Commission meeting is scheduled for April 11th, 2013. At the April meeting, Jose Soares and Jolyon Cowan will provide an overview of each CDBG-funded program's performance and will report on monitoring site visits conducted over the last year. Additionally, Liz Mengers of DHSP's Planning and Development Division will present on the results of the recent homeless census.

Meeting adjourned.