

Kids' Council Mini-Retreat  
NOTES  
Thursday, October 18, 2012  
5:00-9:00  
344 Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

Facilitator Ora Grodsky, Just Works Consulting

Members Present: Steve Swanger, Sally Benbasset, Claude Jacob, Susan Flannery, Mayor Davis, Lori Likis, Tina Alu, Neal Michaels, Louie Depasquale, Shubam Dhital, Marc McGovern, Charlotte Avant, Lena James, Bob Haas, Michelle Godfrey, Heather Weiss, Dean Blase, Jessica Daniels, Ellen Semonoff, Andrea Collymore, Isobel Schpeiser, Betty Bardige, Jeff Young, Nancy Tauber, Nadia Davila

Notes

5:08 begin

Welcome & Introductions

Review and September 27, 2012 Adoption of Minutes (Mayor)

*Steve Swanger approves motion and Sally Benbasset seconds.*

Public Comment

*none*

Updates & Announcements (Mayor)

- YIS is comprised of 17 youth. This year in YIS, we are going to connect more with Kids council and would like to work together. It's going to be a great year.
- Susan sick and Barbara family emergency
- Get your flu shot! Clinics for all ages at community centers, schools and senior centers (and thank you for helping with site visits)
- Next week is Food Day week to celebrate healthy food and healthy eating  
Employee Potluck next weds.  
Sat night at 6:00pm Food heroes at Cordon Blue  
Come! Good way to support community members working on healthy eating and healthy food

5:20 Introduction and Agenda Overview

Desired Outcomes

- Agreement on Kids' Council Operating Principles and Member Agreements
- Shared understanding of Working Draft Kids' Council Vision of Successful Family Engagement in Cambridge
- Agreement on Criteria for Choosing Area(s) of Focus
- Identification of 1-2 areas of focus for 2012-13
- (If time) Preliminary action planning for selected Area(s) of Focus

5:27 Operating Principles and Member Agreements (Ora)

Group discussion: Is anything missing that will really help us do our work together well?

- Clarity around “members will be mindful of asking what we are asking people to do”
    - As a group when making policy recommendations and suggestions to be mindful of the people who are actually doing the work
  - Question on language: “Members” – is that those that attend the meeting or voting members specifically?
    - Challenging because technically under ordinance, voting members are voting members, however there are certain member who have been authorized a designee (i.e. City manager):
    - Suggestion to change language to ‘members and participants’
    - Will be put on the parking lot and discussed later
  - Do we start even if there aren’t enough people in the room?
    - However there is a quorum
    - Suggestion: discussion can move forward but need to be mindful for voting
    - Suggestion: start time for socializing and snacking and then a start time for meeting at 5:30
- Claude Jacobs approves motion and Tina Alu seconds.*
- Whose responsibility is it to keep us inside in these lines?
    - Everybody’s responsibility
  - Suggestion to have member agreement and operating principles up for each meeting

5:39 Working Draft Kids’ Council Vision for FE in Cambridge and Criteria for Choosing Area(s)

Vision

Genuine partnership is grounded in respect between families and the organizations and institutions that provide services and care for youth and children. Families can easily access appropriate information, resources, services and programs in order to obtain the care and opportunities they desire for their children. All providers welcome families and encourage their input regarding decisions affecting children and youth. Providers intentionally build community among families and work to ensure ALL families feel included.

Group discussion: What is a vision? Why have one?

- To guide us; so we can align behind that mission and make the vision happen

Suggested Criteria

1. Utilizes the strengths and resources of the members and Executive Director of the Kids’ Council and offers clear ways for them to contribute.
2. Allows the Kids’ Council to continually learn from families and incorporate the voices, needs and strengths of families into the process.
3. Addresses articulated community needs of greatest urgency.
4. Builds on existing and already planned initiatives, rather than being duplicative.
5. Aligns with function and purpose of the Kids’ Council as stated in the ordinance.
6. Existing measures or easy-to-collect data can be used to track progress toward desired outcomes.
7. Significant implementation can begin with existing resources.
8. Enhances the ability of families to access resources and help providers reach families.

6:03 Table work: Is there any way that you need this criteria to be different? Is there something important that is missing?

Whole group discussion and agreement on new criteria (changes have been bolded)

1. Utilizes the strengths and resources of the members and Executive Director of the Kids' Council and offers clear ways for them to contribute.
2. **Enhances the capacity of KC, providers, agencies and networks to continually learn from families and incorporate the voices, needs and strengths of families with an emphasis on families who historically don't have voice.**
3. Addresses articulated community needs of greatest urgency.
4. Builds on existing and already planned initiatives, rather than being duplicative.
5. Aligns with function and purpose of the Kids' Council as stated in the ordinance.
6. **Benchmarks can be developed to track progress toward desired outcomes and where possible use existing data and information**
7. **Recognize the resource and relationships that already exists at the onset**
8. Enhances the ability of families to access resources and help providers reach families.
9. **Take something on where we can show progress within the year**
10. **Create opportunities for progress within the year**
11. **Initiative will be visible to the people we are trying to reach**

6:26 Dinner Break

6:45 Area(s) of Focus Background Information (Nancy)

Brief reports from members of the Council about what each of these areas mean and what's already happening:

1. Inventory of resources available to families and a clear system for keeping information current and disseminating it to families and providers

Cambridge is rich in resources but people don't know how to find them. No one agency has a grasp on that inventory.

It could be online, print etc. It would be helpful to include participation in programs.

Dean Blase: Interviewed every principal in Cambridge and came up with 350 programs that were interacting with kids – this is not a complete list; entered them into a database format, which became very useful internally. Could sort for ages and theme etc. So an online and paper format could be useful and have powerful impacts (especially internally). KC could hold the responsibility; i.e. for quality control.

What you, as providers, offer- tough to know what the needs are; patterning with databases; An Inventory could help with that.

2. Develop a plan for a full service City-wide Family Resource Center that could include resources, information and training for families and providers.

Nancy Tauber: Came out of early childhood task force: to create an early childhood resource center. The CPS family resource center is a misnomer – more of a family registration center

and not meant to be a resource in the way is being described there. We could be a 'Family Information Hub' and ease some of that frustration.

First initiative was creating a series of family resource centers: A physical location where that would provide info and service. Not duplicate work but connect people to others. Especially important because EC task force is no longer going to be.

3. Develop a City-wide approach to providing translation and interpretation resources to families and providers

Tina Alu: There is not a city line approach to translations. Certain things are translated i.e. important notices and requirements. On-going things are not translated.

Impacts their ability (in a real time basis to communicate in the school) even though there are interpreting services available, families are not always sure how to access them, so didn't have the contact they wanted to have.

Simultaneous translation has had its benefits and challenges: slowed down process and people say "shh shh" to the people who are interpreting.

We have so many languages it is an ongoing challenge. In terms of best practices, we could look to the Cambridge Health Alliance (whose translation is quick and respectful) and learn from them.

4. Enhance the capacity of the Community Engagement Team to allow it to engage more families

Michelle Godfrey: CET is a multi-agency collaborative, reaches out to underserved and isolated communities, helping them to connect through community-building events and community leaders, and support agencies who are supporting these families. Outreach workers are members of families within these communities who have shown leadership and have interest in helping these communities connect. Through looking at school data of the many languages we have (60), CET takes the largest numbers (and who do you see and who do you not see). Outreach workers are trained to go out to providers and connect providers with community members. We train agencies and help them with engagement; conduct parent trainings in homes, work collaboratively to get the community what it needs and more. An example of outreach is CET's outreach work for Baby U -- a 16 wk program, 4<sup>th</sup> cycle at Fletcher Maynard, working with parents with children in-utero to age 3, 10 wk of workshops while doing childcare, play groups, home visit, help connect parents to other parents, support network etc. Collaboration is key. Key stakeholders attend meetings and are members.

Some issues: lots of requests for translation – and we are not translators; currently only have 8 outreach workers, who are hired for about 10 hours and are work is way beyond that.

5. Develop a comprehensive set of competencies and strategies for providers in Cambridge to effectively engage families

Who are the providers? Everyone!

6. Develop a plan to address the “digital access divide” with respect to engagement between the “City” and families, while recognizing rapid changes in technology

Steve Swanger: There has been a real concern that there are people who don't have access to computers, Internet, nor know how to use them. Important because is a real disadvantage for youth (can't electronically access HW or communicate with teachers). How make cities more available digitally? Especially effects low income families live in public housing.

Experience at Newtowne Court; a system developed at MIT, a bunch of transmitters, to fragile a system so CCTV has been maintaining

In a residency satisfaction survey, asked: Do you have internet/computers:

In 2009:

44% of households had computers

41% had internet

Today:

69% have computers

64% have Internet access

Of that, 84% of adults use computers/internet themselves:

7:15 Area(s) of Focus

(65)

Table Work: How do each of these 6 possible Areas of Focus leverage who we are, help us meet our draft vision, and fit with our criteria?

7:50 First Vote on Area of Focus

1. 9

2. 11

3. 11

4. 11

5. 1

6. 2

Whole Group Discussion

Summary of points made during discussion

- Joining 1 and 2 together
- Joining 3 and 4 together
- Needing to do 2 before 1 -- 2 could be a good second step
- The difference between 2 and 4 is that with 2; people go to you and with 4, you go to the people
- Should we pick two areas?
  - If we are going to pick two things: with where we are heading – gauge level of engagement: taking two even though they are related, we will need to think about is it possible to take on two things with finite resources?
  - Pick one and reevaluate in 6 months
- Inventory (#1)
  - Inventory to go off of
  - There is inventory that resides in school dept --school dept could contribute a lot of info and be useful to us, could get results within a year

- It is do-able and a big leap. Would be meaningful to try and figure out what is not as accessible and available (not just online database) and develop that ability to disseminate
- 1 gets nothing to parents in a year or two/and half: 3 & 4 something gets to parents right away.
- 1 is easy, everyone is contributing
- Translation (#3)
  - Translation services are really critical at this point
  - CHA has model for translation that works with patients -- CHA could share model for translation
  - But will require a lot of new resources. Are we able to do more than we are doing already
  - What can we do besides raising more money that would help? What does that really mean?
  - We can develop plan and policy for gaps we have to fill;
  - Does not reach all families (only ones that need translation services); still leaves out disempowered communities
  - 4 has translation aspects to it
- CET (#4)
  - Could get good results in a year,
  - CET is focused on families (our main target)
  - CET focuses on *understanding*: not translating but understanding. We understand better why they aren't engaged and learn from that
  - If the main issue is that there is only 8 ten-hour people; KC could advocate to double or triple the staff -- doesn't take a lot of time to do that. Doesn't effect enough people to help them do a little more
  - Asset based approach: looking at leveraging resources
  - What can we do besides raising more money that would help? What does that really mean?

8:52 – group consensus to take on area of focus #4: Enhance the capacity of the Community Engagement Team to allow it to engage more families

### Closing

#### Plans for next mtg. desired outcomes:

- Put an action plan on paper

#### Plusses/Wishes

##### Pluses:

- Food
- Laid groundwork (groundwork to take off of)
- Incredibly productive
- Accomplished something
- Most people spoke
- Respectful Concessions
- We did not end up just where the mayor ended up; Mayor was able to let that happen; a huge plus is (mayor did a good job)
- Realism
- YIS subcommittee member presence

- Small/large group work
- Did work in anticipation ahead of time; (planning)

Changes:

- Define what we are doing?
- What does it mean?
- Need planning
- Need a sub-committee
- Put on paper a draft action plan
- Involve families in our work

9:05 Adjourn