



Kids' Council & Family Engagement Review May, 2012 – January, 2013

The Kids' Council is charged with developing policy and program recommendations aimed at making sure Cambridge is a place where children and youth are healthy, safe, educated and civically engaged. This year we are focusing on "Family Engagement", and how it plays a vital role in helping us achieve our goals.

May

- ✓ KC voted to focus on Family Engagement for 2012-13

June-September

- ✓ Kids' Council members participated in a visioning activity to determine what family engagement in Cambridge is today, what the members would like it to become in 5 years, and the strategies they think will take it there.
- ✓ The Executive Director took the information from the visioning activity, researched best practices around family engagement, and interviewed over 30 stakeholders in the community to develop an Environmental Scan of Family Engagement in Cambridge and presented it to Kids' Council.
- ✓ The Kids' Council developed a WORKING DRAFT Vision of Successful Family Engagement in Cambridge :

Creating and supporting genuine partnerships grounded in respect between families and the organizations and institutions that serve them.

- *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.*

Updated 1-17-13

October

Area of Focus - In order to fulfill their Vision and Mission of Successful Family Engagement in Cambridge, the Kids' Council agreed to develop recommendations necessary to enhance the capacity of the Community Engagement Team (CET). The Kids' Council will also utilize and leverage its resources to support the recommendations.

Criteria - This decision was based on the following 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. Enhances the capacity of the Kids' Council, providers, agencies and networks to continually learn from families and incorporate the voices, the needs and strengths of families with an emphasis on families who historically don't have a voice.
3. Addresses articulated community needs.
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. Enhances the ability of all families (with emphasis on families with fewer opportunities for access, voice, and participation) to access resources and help providers reach families
7. Benchmarks can be developed to track progress toward desired outcomes and where possible use existing data and information.
8. Recognizes the resources and relationships needed at the onset.
9. Takes something on there we can show progress within a year.
10. Creates opportunities for partnership.
11. Initiative will be visible to the people we are trying to reach.

Youth Involvement Subcommittee (YIS) - Each year, the YIS works on projects related to the Kids' Council's goals and topics that are of interest to the young people. This year the YIS members decided to work with middle school students to help them with the transition to high school, understand what to expect when they get there, and how to get involved and engaged.

November

- ✓ The CET presented their work to the Kids' Council at the November 17th meeting.
- ✓ The CET presentation provided the Kids' Council with an understanding of the CET and the goals of reaching out to families, developing community leaders, and supporting agencies.

December

- ✓ An ad hoc working group was established to develop a draft working plan for the Kids' Council
- ✓ Members of the ad hoc working group represent CET, Kids' Council, and Cambridge Public Schools

YIS – The YIS have gone to several events in the city to reach out to middle school students and provide them with information. Also, they have drop boxes available so that middle schoolers can leave questions, and then the YISers are creating information videos to answer the questions. They are using various forms of social media to engage with future high school students. Currently, they are preparing a series of workshops for middle school students. In February, they are scheduled to do 3 workshops with the 7th and 8th graders at Frisoli.

Please “like” the Cambridge Youth Involvement Subcommittee on Facebook.

January

Work Plan

1. In FY13, Mayor Davis will work with members of the Kids' Council and others in the community to create a Family Engagement policy that will be recommended to the City Council and School Committee for adoption.

2. In FY13, the Kids' Council and the Community Engagement Team commit to collaborate on two joint projects to address family engagement and outreach practices.
 - Project #1 - Asset and Needs Assessment/Survey for Kids' Council and CET members and City, Schools, and Community Providers
 - Project #2 – Family Engagement Best Practices Networking Event in May
3. The Kids' Council will support CET and CET by:
 - Leveraging the resources of Kids' Council members and the agencies they represent to support the CET priorities
 - Developing policy and budget recommendations that will support the CET priorities
 - Advocating for the CET and CET priorities

Community Engagement Team Proposals

❖ **CET Priority #1 - Increase the number of CET outreach workers**

Hire additional outreach workers to enhance family engagement by allowing CET to outreach to additional underserved communities not currently served by CET and/or to increase the number of outreach workers per community thus reaching more families and/or deepening our connection with families in these communities.

❖ **CET Priority #2 - Develop city-wide training program for outreach workers across city (not just CET):**

Offering a comprehensive, high quality and replicable training program is crucial to the success of family engagement and outreach efforts in the city. Family engagement will be enhanced by training outreach workers (not just CET) in effective outreach and family engagement practices to underserved communities, enabling them to reach out to more families in the community. As a result of the training program, participating organizations will integrate new family engagement and outreach practices into their current operating practices. In addition, outreach workers would have been trained in a variety of key core competencies and have a certificate, which would be a step in a career ladder for them.

❖ **Budget Proposal #1: \$37,000**

1. Increase number of CET outreach workers by 2
2. Plan and implement city-wide family engagement and outreach training program

❖ **Budget Proposal #2: \$71,000**

1. Increase number of CET outreach workers by 6
2. Plan and implement city-wide family engagement and outreach training program

4. In FY14, the Kids' Council and CET will develop and implement an action plan based on the outcomes from the Asset and Needs Assessment and Networking Event, feedback from the CET and Kids' Council members, as well as the Kids' Council Criteria used to choose the Area of Focus.

Next Steps

- Family Engagement Policy
- Providers' Survey
- Plan Family Engagement Best Practices Event
- Review CET Priorities and Budget Proposals