



HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Thursday, June 16, 2022

9:30 AM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Human Services and Veterans Committee will conduct a public hearing to receive report from the Department of Human Services and the Co-Directors of the Out of School Time Initiative regarding after school and summer opportunities available in the City presently and moving forward.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A communication was received from Assistant City Manager of Human Services, Ellen Semonoff, transmitting a presentation for the June 16, 2022 Human Services and Veterans Committee hearing.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jun 16, 2022 9:30 AM (Committee Reports)



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS COMMITTEE
COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

JUNE 16, 2022
9:30 AM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: Perfect. Councillor McGovern, you do have a quorum and it is 9:30.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you. Excuse me. Thank you, Madam Clerk. A quorum being present, I called this meeting of the Human Services and Veterans Committee to order.

The call of the meeting is to receive a report from the Department of Human services and the co-directors of the out of school time initiative regarding after school and summer opportunities available in the city presently and moving forward.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the governor, the city is authorized to use remote participation in meetings of the Cambridge City Council and its committees.

In addition, to having members of the council participate remotely, we all-- we have also set up Zoom teleconference for public comment. In order to watch the meeting, please tune in to Channel 22 or visit the open meeting portal on the city's website.

If you would like to provide public comment, please

visit the city council section of the city's web page. Instructions for how to sign up to speak or posted there. Once you have completed the sign of procedure, you will receive a link to the Zoom meeting. We will not allow any additional public comment sign ups after 10 a.m.

All votes, if any, will be taken by roll call. Madam Clerk. Will you please take the role?

City Clerk Paula Crane called the roll:

Councillor Marc McGovern - Present and audible

Councillor Burhan Azeem - Present

Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon - Present and audible

Councillor Paul F. Toner - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Absent.

Present-3, Absent-2. Quorum established.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Good morning everyone. Nice to see you-all, uh, virtually anyway. Uh, so we have a-- Uh, Councillor Toner is here. Um, we, uh-- we are having this meeting to talk about after school programming, uh, there's been a lot of conversation over the last several months to a year plus about, uh, after school, uh, available slots, um, how to get, uh, you know, more opportunities for-- for our-- our folks, our

young folks.

Um, and so, uh, we thought it was-- uh, there have been a couple of policy orders filed above this, so we thought we would have a human services meeting, uh, to get an update, hear from people.

I know there has been a lot of work, uh, going on. Um, there were some changes made, uh, this year to-- to-- to try and address some concerns that were raised for last year. Um, you know, but we are still in a situation where, uh, you know, not every child, uh, or every family that wants after school for their child has been able to-- uh, to get it.

Um, so, uh, it's obviously an issue that we all care very deeply about. Um, it's a-- it's a complicated issue because it involves the school department and involves the-- the city. Um, uh, you know, the council is obviously, you know, very interested and very supportive of expanding opportunities where we can, um, but council only has so much, uh, authority in-- in this conversations.

So it's a lot group work, so it's good to get everybody together so we can all be on the same page and, uh, you know, as we think of how best way to move forward.

So, uh, clearly you don't wanna here from me.

So, um, there are other people here that know more a lot more. So Ellen, I guess I'm going to turn it to you. I don't know if you want to introduce all the folks that you have, uh, brought with you today and then we can jump right into it. We'll do a presentation from DHSP.

Um, I think we have eight people signed in public comment, so we'll go, uh, to public comment after the presentation because some those folks may have questions, uh, that we may want to, you know, to answer in our discussion, uh, and then we will go to city council discussion and Q&A. Uh, all right, so without further ado.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Semonoff.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: And, um, I want to thank you for, um, inviting us here today and I will start by introducing the folks who are here. Um, so I'm Ellen Semonoff, the Assistant City Manager for Human Services and I'm joined today by Michelle Farnham, who is our Assistant Director for Children, Youth and Families and oversees all of our child and youth serving programs.

I'm also joined by Khari Milner and Susan Richards,

who are the, um, co-directors of the Agenda for Children Out-of-School time Initiative, and also joined by Emie Michaud Weinstock and Rachel Grashow, who, um, I think many of the council know because they were, um, the, um, caregivers who, uh, worked with the council in, um, requesting that the department create a caregivers advisory council.

Um, so I'm gonna just do a brief intro and then turn it over to, um, members of the team. So I just want to start by saying that, um, I want to acknowledge as I think we all do the incredible distress that we're hearing, that you're hearing, um, from parents who are struggling to find after school care for their children.

All of our team who are here today are parents, um, and either currently or in the past have faced the same issues of, um, trying to figure out and we know that that's true for many members of the, um, city council, Human Services Committee have faced the same issues for their Children.

Um, as we previously, um, talked about back in December of 2021 with the last time we appeared before the Human Services Committee and then again at our budget

hearing in May, there are some changes that have created some of the outcry that you're hearing, but those changes do not generally include a decrease in the current available spaces for out of school time.

Um, there are many different reasons, some of which we have a pretty good idea of and some of which we may not fully understand for why there is such a significant increase in families who are, um, looking for care and, um, not finding it.

Um, one piece of that is that there's a significant increase in the number of low income families who are being served, which has shifted to some extent the burden of not having child care to families who are somewhat higher income and more inclined and more likely to be advocating for services.

Um, we believe that there's also a significant increase caused by the pandemic, um, and that, um, in both the desire for families to have child care, in the anxiety that families are feeling and in their desire for programming to support, particularly the social emotional growth of their children, so all of those things.

Um, and probably others have combined, um, to create

the sort of firestorm that you're seeing, but I just want to emphasize that it is not by and large the result of a big change in the number of, um, slots available across the city for children. Um, so, um, I'm not sure who's running the slides. Um, Madam Clerk is that you who are running the slides or are we?

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: I think Ms. Farnham is.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Okay.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Um, and while she does that, just, uh, Madam Clerk with the record show that Mayor Siddiqui, uh, has been with us as well, I think.

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: Thank you.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Um, Michelle if you want to go to the next slide. Um, so first, just, um, to sort of say who we are, I think that the city council certainly has a very strong idea about this, which is just that we are, um, a department which provides a wide range of services across the board and that most of our services are designed and responsive to the needs that we hear from the residents of Cambridge, and it includes extensive services really that touch across the board, um, from newborns to senior citizens, from school aged

children, from, um, our funding of and partnership with nonprofit organizations and to our services, um, for local employers.

Um, I would say that much of our service, um, is directed towards low income families and low income residents, although we also have a number of, um, programs and services that are more universally available.

Um, next slide Michelle please. Um, and just-- I'm not gonna walk you through this whole thing, um, but I just want to say to give you some sense of sort of the organization.

So obviously, the city council and then to the city manager and then to me as the assistant city manager, but the circles, I really want to draw attention to the, I guess the ovals really, um, the, um, rectangles and squares reflect the programmatic pieces of the department, but those ovals actually reflect the partnerships that we are a major, um, player in or director of.

Um, and often these are partnerships between the city and the schools or the city and the schools and community agencies and, um, those would be, um, recognizable to you, the Early Childhood Partnership, the Agenda for Children,

which is front and center today, Family Policy Council, um, the Office of College Success, the Steam Initiative.

Um, so just to give you a sense of where the agenda for children sits, which is as a deep partnership and our colleagues will talk more about that between the city and the schools created more than 20 years ago as a partnership, um, between the city, the schools, and our nonprofit partners. Um, I'm now gonna turn this over, um, to Michelle Farnham to talk a little bit about where we've been and where we are.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Thank you so much, Ellen and thank you for having us. Um, sort of to give a little background of why we're here and also to provide an update from the last-- since the last time we've been together.

As Ellen talked about, um, in this sector of out of school time, we have a systemic problem, which is not unique to Cambridge. There's just not an adequate number of seats to serve all children whose families want to send them to an after school program.

Um, in Massachusetts, the data suggests that only 25 percent of families statewide are able to access out of

school time programs that meet their needs.

In Cambridge, our city operated and community-based organization operated after school programs have the capacity for approximately 40 percent of the elementary school, uh, Cambridge public schools population.

Um, they're about 3,600 elementary school children in Cambridge. And before this past academic year, we had about 1,100 seats in city run programs, um, and approximately 300 seats in the community-based programs that operate, um, sort of what we're-- what we're calling full after school programs, so five day a week programs.

The pandemic, as Ellen mentioned, seemed to increase the demand for after school programs and heightened some of the disparities, um, that had left-- often left lower-income families with fewer options.

The cost of programming, the knowledge of programming options, and the process to-- to apply were often barriers to access for, uh, families and particularly lower income families. Um, as we have mentioned before in this meeting and others, staffing in space are also major challenges that need to be solved in order to get to a place where all children can have, um, access to after school.

In October and then again in December of 2021, we met with this committee to report on the changes we made to our enrollment systems. Um, and we shared some data and outcomes of that process along with some of our key learnings.

As a result of those two meetings, we identified several next steps as part of our ongoing program improvement efforts related to our out of school time programming and today I can update you a little bit on that work.

Um, as we left, um, our last meeting in December, we shared five, um, sort of next steps for us and they involved some, uh, staffing and, um, issues around staffing, so I can share with you that as a result, um, of our December meeting, we continue to recruit additional part time staff, um, and we're able to open several, although not all of the classrooms, um, in community schools and youth centers that were not staffed in September.

Additionally, we were able to advocate for and receive funding for additional full time program director positions for our community schools programs. We've been interviewing

and filling those positions since January.

We were also able to increase the salaries for our part time and are full time youth serving staff. Um, and that was really to help with the retention and recruitment, um, for staff for our out of school time programs. We talked about wanting to work on, uh, small expansion projects with the Cambridge public schools so that we could reach our 2019/2020 capacity specifically at Amigos, MLK and Morse.

Um, we added Cambridgeport to that list and have begun discussions with, uh, the public schools on whether or not, uh, those expansions could be possible. The issue for us right now is staffing and so even if we were to get, um, the okay to add an additional classroom, for instance, at the Morse school, currently are so staffing levels do not allow us to expand.

And, um, in addition to the recruitment issues that we've had, we have in a retention issue with our staff. So as we feel like we're ready, we may get a resignation and we can't-- we have, um, ratios that we have to-- to-- to abide by so we can't just keep adding children when we are losing staff. So that has been an issue, but something that

we are committed to continue to work towards, um, in the--
in those areas.

Um, we talked about wanting to expand the criteria for
priority seats beyond the income eligibility. So currently,
um, our priority seats, um, are based on income eligibility
for families and we wanna look at what else could that
include. Um, we began to talk about this with, um,
caregivers and other stakeholders and we have decided that
we didn't want to do that without the input of others.

And as we move towards our work with our caregiver
council that will be a place that we will be seeking input
on that expansion of the criteria for priority seats. We
talked about initiating our out of school time expansion
study and, um, as a result of that we advocated for and
secured resources to begin that work.

Um, we've met with the Agenda for Children, um, who
are here today as our partners to plan, um, to begin that
work. And in February and June, um, at the out of school
time coalition meetings, um, I brought-- introduced the
idea of this expansion study and the impact on our
coalition. Um, and we began to gather information from our
out of school time colleagues.

Um, the Agenda is gonna talk a little today about the information they have already gathered from 2020, um, and they are in the process of collecting data for-- from the coalition on the 2022 data from across the city.

And finally, we talked about exploring the development of a caregiver's council. Um, and I want to quickly introduce, um, Emie Michaud Weinstock and Rachel Grahow who have been working with us to envision the process for this work. So I'm gonna turn it over to Emie and Rachel.

MS. EMIE MICHAUD WEINSTOCK: Thank you, Michelle. Um, so I am gonna go, um, first. Um, so the caregiver-- this idea around a caregiver council really came about around September 2021, um, during the time that, um, DHSP was rolling out, um, new systems, um, that really were policies that were, um, seeking to remediate but as well as move forward from a place of equity, um, you know, in thinking about how to create-- these were systems as you already know that, uh, they were thinking about rolling out and then did so took an opportunity to roll out.

Um, our involvement became, uh, for us imperative when we saw the backlash of caregivers who became very irate about what was happening, um, and it did not seem that they

were taking account-- into account that actually this was an attempt to-- um, not only create new systems of moving but to also remediate how, um, resources have traditionally historically and continue to not be available, um, to high priority families as they are defined currently and hopefully will be expanded, um, as we move forward.

Um, and so this really created, um, um, you know, dissonance within us because we looked at Cambridge and the Cambridge that we seek to raise our Children in and the power, uh, of advocacy of certain caregivers was not coming from a place of equity. That power was being used actually to increase inequities.

Um, and we, um, moved forward and spoke with the city council but also started having really in depth conversations with Michelle, um, and Ellen about what was possible and they were really receptive, um, and you know, thought about, well, if we think about these new changes in these new policies, um, how then do we move forward so that they're just not standalone policies?

Um, and this is where an idea about-- um, you know, we brought the idea about a caregiver council, um, to think about how do we systems change, not just have a body that

sits down next to but co creates, um, and brings in, um, new ideas and is not done for but with, um, is-- provides caregivers who need and must be at the table because here's who these services must be for have agency in creating those programs.

Um, and so the-- the policy order, um, specifically speaks to high party families that are detrimentally impacted and it speaks to COVID. What we propose is that-- actually COVID wasn't the start of these inequities and being detrimentally impacted.

Um, so we can't necessarily create a council that is solely, um, launched off because of COVID, it's something that needs to think about how families have histo-- historically-- um, high pretty families have historic-- historic-- I'm having a hard time with this word, um, not been served.

Um, not have not-- have not had clear transparent communication, authentic communication, um, where they can make the desk decisions for their family, where they articulate their needs. Um, and then they are creators of the solutions to meet their needs.

Um, and that's what this council imagines, um, and it

imagines moving from a place where caregiver voice is, um, is-- is real and it's not based on fake equity, um, and it requires that, um, caregivers in Cambridge, um, step back so other caregivers can step up where they need to.

MS. RACHEL GRASHOW: Okay. I mean, I'm gonna speak for a minute. I have to jump off because my child is graduating kindergarten. I'll be coming back on, but I'm sorry to miss any of this because I think this is an incredibly important meeting.

Um, and I want to affirm everything Emie was saying about what our motivations are for being here. And I think a key piece for us as well was that if Emie and I with Michelle and Ellen came in and decided what this council would do and be ourselves and assigned spots and make those decisions, will be perpetuating the same systems of voices being unheard that have been going on.

So we've been working very deliberately and carefully and productively and positively, I feel with Michelle and Ellen, to move this forward in a way that dismantles and under-- undermines previous oppressive systems.

So that's been a really important piece of this effort. Um, the system change we want to see is to repair

and reimagine the relationship between DHSP and Cambridge families, especially families have been marginalized, alienated, or excluded.

As Emie said if you're providing services for the work needs to be guided by high priority families. Um, and we really wanna put things in place so that we can move out of the way and let those who need to speak, speak. Um, and generally speaking the activities that we envisioned for the council would be that the council-- we took out the word advisory, we're really calling it the caregiver council for now because it's not just an advisory role, we want this-- this to have teeth.

There is a mandate by the policy order, we want them to-- we want this council to impact and guide, um, programmatic changes so play an active role in the development programs, provide input and feedback to DHSP, service conduit for information and transparency with the community, consult plan and guide communication.

Um, we feel that this council would play an iterative roll with this out of school time landscape assessment that they would both be informed by what they learned from the landscape assessment and then guide further landscape

assessments as we narrow in on what information we need to make the best decisions for our children.

And one of the task we thought that would fall nicely and appropriately under this caregiver council would be the definition of high priority families. At the moment, it is specific to income, which obviously is incredibly important, but there are other ways that families are excluded, uh, like families of color, um, English language learners, neurodivergent, immigrant communities.

Like there are other high priority definitions that I think the community should have a say in and not for us to decide, not for, um, allowed families to decide. Uh, we feel like that would be one of the first tasks of the council. So, uh, I'm gonna hop off in a minute but-- but thanks to everybody. Um, yeah.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Good luck Rachel. And thank you, Emmy and Rachel, um, for your participation. I'm gonna turn this over to my colleague Khari Milner, uh, who as Ellen said earlier is one of the co-directors for the Agenda for Children. Um, the Agenda whose role, uh, really is as a intermediary, um, in the out of school time community will be leading the work on this study, um, and

I'm gonna turn it over to you. Welcome Khari.

MR. KHARI MILNER: All right. Thank you, Michelle.

Good morning everyone. And good to see some familiar names and faces. I'm Khari Milner and one of the co-directors of the Cambridge agenda for Children out of school time.

As Michelle mentioned, we are a city wide intermediary supporting out of school time or OST as we often call it, for short, um, expanded learning opportunities, after school summer camp, vacation programs, that's the landscape that we support.

Uh, our work is similar to what other programs and organizations I should say do in cities across this country. And so the idea of a citywide intermediary supporting out of school time exporting-- excuse me, supporting, uh, high quality programs, supporting more equitable access, supporting partnerships with our city departments, including, uh, the school department where I work, um, is again something that we see in many other cities that are trying to support equitable access to out of school time for as many families as possible.

Um, yes. So you see-- I'm sorry, I'm looking at my share screen looks a little different. Our mission as-- as

you saw right there, thank you, uh, is to convene catalyze and support the youth serving community in Cambridge for the shared purpose of increasing equity, access, and innovation and sustaining the highest quality OST opportunities and experiences for all Cambridge Children, youth, and families.

Uh, the next slide, please. Thanks. So the org chart which you see here-- one thing I just want to emphasize is that we straddle two departments, uh, you heard me mention I'm working with the Cambridge public schools as a district administrator under Dr. Turk and Susan Richard. So you'll here from shortly. Working with Department of Human Services, uh, under Ellen Semonoff.

And-- and then we branch out and we have a pretty lean team, but I think we, you know, we pack a heavy punch chips, they say, and we work, you know, everything from awareness building to collecting of data, which I'll talk about more in a minute.

Uh, we work directly with practitioners in many different forms, um, supporting professional development, supporting coaching, supporting on site assessment, uh, and strategic planning.

Uh, we convene different types of networks and communities of practice, um, and we work directly with families, um, in a very-- in a tiered way, you know, looking at, uh, highest priority case management opportunities as well as strategies that would hopefully impact every family and every young person in Cambridge. Next slide, please.

So here's some of our, um, beliefs-- our shared beliefs, um, as an intermediary and we've built these over the years. One, I want to lift up is-- um, number two, which is young people and families are better served when the systems and institutions that support them are aligned and connected.

So, you know, the crux of our work, we know that, um, the out of school time field-- if you will, uh, the out of school time ecosystem in Cambridge is complex. We know that, you know, young people, children, youth, uh, and their families and caregivers, uh, are impacted in sort of, uh, in positions where they may or may not benefit by different elements of this ecosystem, you know, just left on its own.

So we are working together as we see here today with

colleagues in the city, uh, particularly in the nonprofit sector, in the schools and the libraries and other places to help our young people and families. Next slide.

So here's a visual of our theory of change. I will not read all the way through this. What I will mention is, um, we work at many different levels, if you will, in altitudes and this theory of change does speak to that.

So as I, uh, alluded earlier, we do work, you know, very much, um, sort of case management on the ground, um, supporting the navigation of barriers, the navigation of, uh, application processes of supporting scholarships, uh, how to subsidize ways for young people to get access for families to get into programs.

And we do systems citywide program-- um, sorry, level work as well. And all of this work at the end of the day is driven by equity and so you can see in the top, um, it's kind of small and I'll read it for you. There's one is, um, about equity and says every child, young person, and family in Cambridge has awareness of and access to quality out of school time programs.

So simply put, you know, it's-- we know there's a lot of steps to understanding what's out here. You know, our

team develops and produces resource guides, uh, multiple times per year, um, slides, other types of online and hard copy resources for different grade levels.

Um, and that's a piece of getting the awareness piece, but also of course the work of actually connecting folks and looking at policies and how they may or may not support families access to OST. Next slide.

So I've mentioned, uh, the concept of an ecosystem in the sector and, um, I also want to talk about the out of school time coalition. So the Agenda for Children, uh, as a convener, we support, uh, anyone who's providing out of school time in Cambridge.

And so there's a lot of programs that, you know, consistently serve the, uh, families and children, the students of Cambridge public schools in a lot of ways that's, uh, our main sort of clientele. Our main work is with those programs that support those families.

And we know that people who are running these programs and working in them, leading them, organizing them, um, they have many different shapes and sizes that they come in.

Um, however, our purpose is to bring them together to

network-- to organize with them and reimagine how to best expand equity and access to the quality out of school time programs across our city, both for now and into the future.

And so we do that by bringing folks together, you know, about three times a year and, uh, now starting again in person. You see some photos there from a meeting we had last week at the Moses Youth Center. We were doing some dot, um, poles to get information about how they collect data, how they use data, what tools they're using.

And so these are things that we come together to work with them on and then to imagine again what the road ahead can look like. Next slide.

So these were our recent, um, meetings that I-- I'll lift up that are connected to data. And, um-- well, I should say recent efforts to collect data. We did talk about them at our coalition meetings as well. But in June 2020, uh, they did a program profile data survey which did give us information about staffing and enrollment.

Um, we did present that information back to the coalition and Cambridge public schools, uh, that summer. Um, and we are currently collecting more program profile data, um, from all the programs in our coalition.

And anybody of course, who's running a program can become a part of our coalition just to be clear and we do bring on new members all the time. Um, and I'll also mention that we collect enrollment data as well through a Cambridge public school community partners portal.

Um, so there's different streams of data that we bring in. I'll talk a little bit about some of what we've learned. So in terms of who we are, in terms of this coalition, um, you'll see depending on what side your screen is, uh, that we have-- the first column of community based organizations and you'll see a lot of hopefully common, at least for a lot of families from our different communities.

We know very well about the Cambridge community center. We know about the Community Arts Center, the Margaret Fuller House, East End House. We may know about more specialized programs like City Sprouts or Tutoring Plus Science Club for Girls.

These are the folks who are nonprofits who are running programs, some of which have been running for more than, you know, 100, 120 years in our city serving our community. On the right, you see, uh, two columns that include all the

programs being run by the Department of Human services and together they make up-- we make up, I should say, um, the coalition.

There are also programs that are kind of, uh, connected to the schools which we do support in different ways. But due to the obvious sort of, um, discrepancy in terms of the workday schedule for in school versus out of school folks, it takes extra effort to bring those folks together consistently. And so that's part of my work and my team's work within Cambridge public schools. Next Slide.

Um, so I just wanted to show you, you know, how we convene folks through, um, some of the networks and by grade level. And so of the 49 programs that did respond to our, um, survey in 2020 you'll see again on the left, you have more programs in the elementary school network, uh, serving JK to fifth grade.

We have a middle school network for programs that serve fifth-- excuse me, sixth through eighth grade. And then we have, uh, Reaching All Youth or RAY which, uh, works in networks with, uh, programs serving high school students.

That's a collaboration with, uh, Department Human

Services Office of Workforce Development is the one who coordinates RAY. Uh, just to-- just suppose sort of what the enrollment of CPS looks like currently. You'll see that the vast majority of the young people are in elementary or early elementary grades or elementary in general, PK through fifth.

Um, in middle school we have about 1,200 students and then at the high school it's approaching 2,000 and again. Um, and just-- I point this out just to tell you in terms of like how many programs are members of each of the networks and sort of how we think strategically about, um, where to put resources, where to think about, um, issues of access, of space, of capacity, of staffing. Next slide.

So there's been questions about space. And so one thing we ask our programs is to help us to understand where they're located and sort of how they are able to keep, you know, the doors open. And so, uh, this graph or this chart here is breaking down, um, how programs responded to where they're located, right?

So there's the first column which is the organization that owns their own property. Um, we have 16 folks out of the 49 who responded that they do. And then the biggest bar

there is the organizations that partner with CPS to have space, that's 35 organizations.

And then, um-- and that includes DHSP programs and in many cases and then, um, there's other folks who have either they have other property that they lease or, um, they may be sitting in another building in another department.

So the, uh-- the other thing to point out here is, uh, of the programs that we work most closely with many of them, the majority are licensed by the Department of Earlier Care and that means, as Michelle mentioned earlier, they run five days a week. They run, uh, the majority of the year. A lot of them all the way through the summer.

Um, they have all types of rigs that they have to keep up with and, um, they run, uh-- excuse me, they work with age is essentially, I think it's four-and-a-half up through 13.

So again those are really the elementary years solid and then into middle school we start to see some more diversification and specialization of programming that are not typical or as typically licensed.

A couple last slides here about staffing. What we've

learned-- the big takeaway from this graph is the majority of our staff are part time of the 800 plus that we were able to tally through their responses-- programs responses to our, um, study.

Um, we found that, uh, this is a workforce that is, uh, majority part time. A lot of folks, um, holding down multiple jobs. Uh, some of them might even have another part time job in the school, but those are may be the more fortunate ones because they have stability in Cambridge.

And because of that, you can imagine some of the fluidity that has always been in our field and a challenge to our field. Uh, and then just to take a click up to kind of look nationally.

Um, there was a study that, uh, was done, uh, first half COVID and we had programs contribute to and what you'll see is, um, across the country, the two leading issues or challenges for out of school time programs and providers are finding staff to hire or staffing shortages and then also retainment, so the maintaining of staff levels, um, through these times.

And so as we come on the other side of this this will continue to be a challenge. But this is a challenge that,

uh, you know, we're familiar with. And it's also part of what we think about policy and we think about budget making and we think about how to incentivize folks staying in our field and growing up to contribute to lead in our field which many, um, you know, graduates from CPS do work in our programs.

Uh, these are things we work both with DHSP, with CPS and we're happy to work with others. I'm going to pass it back to Michelle.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Thank you so much, Khari. Um, for the sort of overview, um, and the beginning of sharing of some of the data that's necessary for us to begin to look at, you know, what it would take to expand the after school, um, slots here in Cambridge.

It's a very complex and, um, integrated as you called it ecosystem. Um, and while DHSP as you shared in the data represents, um, a pretty large majority of, uh, the programs that make up our coalition.

We are not the only player in town, um, and even in a-- in a school building, um, our programs-- um, we might have multiple programs of DHSP alongside, um, other out of school time providers in a-- um, in a single school.

So I wanted to share with you just some-- like an overview of our slice of the pie of the-- the-- the out of school time landscape and, um, our programs at DHSP that run, um, sort of the five day a week after school programs that we are focused on here today. Um, really cover, um, four different slices of the pie.

So we run, um, child care through our child care division. We run licensed after school programs. There are seven classrooms across four different school sites. Um, we run community schools programs at 11 school sites.

Um, we run the King Open Extended Day which has seven classrooms at one site, and we operate five youth centers, um, at five different sites. So this represents, um, our daily capacity for a number of children, um, through our licenses and our current, um, service levels, uh, across DHSP.

So, uh, community schools, uh, for 2022/2023, 702, the Cambridge Youth programs through our youth centers, 295 the childcare licensed after school programs. We have 170 licensed seats and the King Open Extended Day will have 130 seats.

And I'm gonna share with you-- um, just to reiterate

something that Ellen talked about, um, in her opening, which is looking at specifically the community schools daily capacity over the 2019, the-- this past year 2021 and next year 2022 years, our cap daily capacity has not shifted very much.

And so the outcry, um, that we're hearing and feeling about, um, the after school crisis is not because we have decreased the number of, um, daily seats in our community school programs or are licensed programs otherwise. Um, it really-- you know, there are, I think, a variety of reasons and some of this study is for us to understand what are the contributing factors to this.

Um, we have some suspicions as Ellen mentioned before, the pandemic, I think, um, increased families desires for after school, um, and we shifted sort of the who was in these seats and so we have not changed the number of, uh, seats available, but we did change how we enrolled, um, and who we prioritized and so, um, I wanted to just share that the data about the daily seats has not shifted entirely.

Okay. Um, folks had asked, um, us to share some information about our community schools lottery-- follow lottery, um, which is happening right now. Um, we are in

the process of conducting our lottery as we speak. Um, and so this year's lottery, we, uh, learned from last year and heard from families that moving the dates earlier, um, would be, um, helpful and so we did. We opened the lottery applications on May 16 and they were open until June 3rd. We will be notifying families, uh, the week of June 27.

We, uh, conducted a significant amount of outreach, um, particularly trying to focus on our, um, underserved populations. We, um, did, uh, several door to door, uh, door knocking campaigns, um, to inform families, particularly in housing developments in Cambridge.

We did, um, an individual mailing to, uh, the-- uh, to Cambridge, uh, housing authority residents. We shared our information with the school liaisons who we met with and shared it with specifically so that they could conduct outreach. Um, and it was included in many of the individual school newsletters as well as by the superintendent in four of her weekly messages, um, to ensure that as many people as possible, uh, could get the information. We obviously also shared it with our current enrolled families.

In this year's lottery or this, um, this fall lottery, 1,170 individual children entered the lottery. Um, of

those, 32 percent of the applicants, um, were priority income applicants and 68 percent were general applicants.

Um, we did have priority applicants from every school, um, and sort of the population from each school, um, that, uh, applied ranged. There was a huge, um, variants of who applied, um, a low of 13 percent at one school of priority applicants to a high of 80 percent of the applicants from each school were considered low income.

Um, an interesting but not surprising piece of data is that of all the applicants, 68 percent of them are entering JK through second grade. Um, and of that 50 percent of them are JK to first. So most of the applicants, two thirds are lower elementary school applicants, so only one third of the applicants are from third to fifth grade.

Um, in terms of the race of the applicants, we had 17 percent identify as, um, Asian or East Indian, 20 percent identified as black, 47 percent as white, and 16 percent of them prefer to self describe their race, 12 percent describe their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.

Uh, we had a question about what were the top choices, uh, by the families who did enter the lottery and, uh, the top choices are indicated here. Uh, the Peabody school

followed by the King school followed by the Gram and Parks School.

So I also, uh, received some questions, um, from the special-- special education parent advisory council and, um, received them earlier this week and I wanted to provide some data.

Um, although some of the questions were very specific and I'm not able to share. I don't-- I didn't have time to gather this data and we'll have to work on, um, finding answers to that. But I wanted to give some general information just about our inclusion services and sort of, um, in general not specific to this lottery.

Um, but in general, what is the population of children with, um, special needs that the department serves? So a question that we received had to do with what is the criteria for determining-- determining if a student who has an IEP needs support and/or accommodations?

So our criteria for participation, um, in DHSP programs has to do with whether or not a child, um, can participate in group activities, uh, whether or not they can follow the rules and keep themselves and others safe, um, and whether or not they can successfully transition

through the activities offered in a day.

So that is sort of the criteria for participation in our programs. Um, and there was an ask about what the criteria is for determining whether or not a child needs a one-to-one aid in order to participate. And that criteria is about looking at our general participation criteria and whether or not, um, through um examination of their IEP, uh, interviews with parents and other caregivers.

So whether or not they have therapists or school day teachers, whether or not the data supports that they can, uh, meet all of the criteria, um, in the program either by themselves or with support including up to a one-to-one.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Michelle?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Yeah.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Could you-- is this the next slide?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: No, I don't have a slide on this. As I said I got the question late.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Okay.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: This was, uh--

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Sorry, I saw the next slide was OST.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Oh, sorry. Um, so I just wanted to be able to provide some information to the questions that were asked about inclusion but I don't have a slide on it. So I apologize and we will we can get some of this, uh, information but I didn't have time to collect all the data.

Um, also wanted to share that in a typical year, we, um, we enroll anywhere between 190 to 260, um, students who have IEPs. And of that, um, the number of children who are-- um, who require a one-to-one to part participate is-- is very low. Um, you know, I would say a proxy-- would be under 10 or about 10 every year.

Um, we have other children who may require kind of proximity-- proximity support. So where we will hire additional staff for a group of children not for-- not as a one-to-one. Um, and some other information, um, that we have-- that I do have answers to is, um-- let me see. Someone asked about the current pay level for inclusion facilitators. It is right now between 20 and \$22 an hour.

It's the same as all of our, um, youth serving, um, part time staff. Um, and that's sort of the answers that I have for now and I can work on providing, um, answers, um,

that I received from the CPAC, um, at a later time.

So that's the information I have, um, about our presentation about the lottery, but I do want to turn it over to my colleague, Susan Richards from the Agenda for Children who can talk a little bit more about the next steps in our, um, expansion study.

MS. SUSAN RICHARDS: Hi, everyone. Um, good to be with you. Uh, so I know where-- we want to move to parents who are-- caregivers who are here to-- to-- to engage with us, so I'm gonna be brief. Um, so we are at the very beginning stages, um, with the expansion study work that will be engaging in, um, deeply this year.

Um, I-- I will say that from what you've already heard, the-- our readiness to-- to get into this work is-- is, um, is good. Um, I think the history of the city's investment in the Agenda for Children to build the-- the, uh, collective work, um, of the out of school time community, um, is something that we can really lean on right now.

Um, when we started this work 20 years ago, you know, the environment was-- was very siloed and very competitive. I think we built a community who works really well

together, um, both on meeting the needs of-- of our community but also as-- supporting each other as a professional community and our growth and development, um, to provide quality programming.

Um, so-- and I think the fact that Khari and I are positioned in the school department and the department of services is also an important component of our readiness. Khari mentioned our colleagues around the country often intermediaries are nonprofit organizations that work outside of government and city departments, which, um, can sometimes be helpful, but in our case we can leverage the fact that we're internal to city departments really to move things, um, in a way that can be more challenging for other intermediaries.

Um, and so I just want to say that the-- the agenda, um, and the coalition, um, which as you know includes and is a huge, um, the-- the majority of programs are department services, but it really is the strength of the collective, um, that we-- that we lean on, that we as a community over the years, um, have worked very hard to support the work force which as you heard with the workforce shortage and the turnover in our workforce was

being predominantly part time.

The ongoing support to that group of individuals to retain them and keep them moving in the career ladder and staying with us, um, to make sure that our programs are getting stronger, um, is not easy work. It's-- it's ongoing work because of the nature of our sector, um, that we've always held up the critical nature of family partnership for out of school time that we know that we cannot do this alone and the respect and in partnership with the children's families is critical to the quality of our work.

Um, and that, um, the third being the partnership with the schools is-- is essential. So we do see this kind of whole experience over the time that we've been messaging this and-- and-- and talking about this and professional development in our-- our-- the community building of our coalition. So just so, you know, these are all components of the readiness of this expansion study and the growth of the sector.

Um, so what I-- what I'll say and on this slide, what it, um, shares with us some just sort of really initial design components. We really need to launch into the actual design of the study, um, in the coming months. Um, but um,

you know, sort of for, um, sort of big areas are, you know, capacity study.

So, you know, the-- to look at what currently exists and where this room. So this is, um, space is a huge issue. You see it's-- we're in the schools, um, we own buildings, the youth centers, the city owns those, all the nonprofits, a lot of them own the buildings there in. Um, so that's a great resource, but we really need to look at like our space resource and whether we're fully utilizing that.

You know, you're looking at the workforce issues which we keep talking about and, you know, the-- the cost, I mean, these are not all city funded programs, um, and the diversity of peoples fundraising to support, um, these slots and programs is-- is very diverse and we have all that data as well.

Um, the second area, um, is the critical partnership with families and caregivers. So understanding needs, um, understanding barriers to-- to access, um, inequity. This is an ongoing conversation we have had at different levels over the years, um, that we're really excited, I think to get deeper into, um, spaces with-- with all kinds of families, to really hear all voices to really more deeply

understand the issues because we all sort of-- there's the pre-pandemic, there's-- there's the pandemic I suppose.

Like we are not living in the same times and so things we knew, um, sort of pre-pandemic about our families and our community, um, those things have shifted.

So we have to be in constant communication with folks to understand. And Cambridge is shifting, um, demographically in-- in the-- in who we are and we have to be in constant communication. And we look forward to the fact that the city is investing resources to do this study because, um, we welcome the opportunity for deeper, um, um, deeper opportunity for impact-- input.

And-- and like Emmy said, really more of a shared, um, conversation, a dialogue, um, and building of this work going forward with them. Um, the examination of the workforce, including pay equity benefits, professional development and access to career ladders is very significant in this sector. Given as Khari told you, the majority of our workforce are part time, so we're not unfamiliar with the turnover rates, especially in the front line.

We do try to get people in the front line and move up

in the-- into the director and full-time roles. So we have continuity and strength, um, in our community. And so it's not unfamiliar to us to turn over and we are dealing with a much more, uh, intense moment in our history like I've never seen and I've been in the work in the city my entire career.

The, you know, the retention and the hiring processes are really very different right now. So we are doing the best we can to attract and hold, um, folks and also take good care of the folks who are here so that they will feel supported and will stay with us.

Um, and finally, the cost, um, to provide quality programs were sort of unpacking that more and more with all of the, um, members of the coalition around their budgets, what their funding is like, you know, um, what it costs to run a quality program, um, and the tuition and subsidies across the system.

So, you know, the states involved with subsidies, the cities involved with subsidies, um, families are paying. Um, and, you know, those funding streams don't always match the actual cost to run the programs.

Um, so there's always offsets going on and fundraising

that happens, whether it's from the city or the foundations, um, that the non-profits are going after. So really trying to more deeply understand what it costs. Um, the complexity of the system and what it takes to serve all families, um, is the work ahead.

Um, the timing of the study is that we've given us, you know, this this current, you know, some starting in the summer and through the school year, so we're hopeful to really get into it with with everyone, um, with all of us, you know, working together, we'll engage some consultants to work with us and, you know, we're hopeful to be sort of moving the culture forward as we study, because we all-- we work here, we are here, we will be here.

So it's not just a study that we dropped on us, we will be engaging in this study and looking at culture shift happening as we engage in this study and have voices at the table.

Thank caregivers. You know, school staff are really important voices. We need to be, we-- we-- we engage with but we need to engage with more deeply if we're looking at expansion in the-- in the school buildings.

And I just want to say on the speed of change, I think

about this, you know. My patients when I started this work was pretty-- it wasn't real patient, you know, you want things to happen differently for-- for young people, um, in this community and you-- you do develop patients when you work in big institutions.

Um, and-- and institutions move really slowly and I want to say that we all know that sometimes we can speed things up, um, when we-- when we work together and we prioritize things and we really all push in the same direction.

And I'll say an example of that, that I just witnessed last year, um, was and there's many examples of this in the city. We tear down schools and we build new ones, like that's a radical change that improves the quality of our young people's experience.

When the Department of Human Services, um, decided to-- to put this equity, um, initiative in place, it was a radical change. I mean, it happened quickly, that's why we're seeing this reaction, but it was something we've been wanting and worried about for a long time.

Like are we serving all the families who need us and-- and knowing that we weren't, but what are we gonna do to to

shift that? And-- and when that happened, and it, um, it may-- it made me realize we can do things, um, that are radical, that have impact.

And we don't need to have everything move as slowly as we sometimes get accustomed to things happening. So I just want to say it's-- it's, you know, it's important to be patient with change and respect the complexity and the hard work that all of us are doing as people raising children, people working on behalf of children in this city and that, you know, we work together, we might actually be able to move some of the changes, um, that we need.

So I'm gonna pass it back to Michelle. Just want to say looking forward to working with everyone here and everyone in this community to realize our aspirational dreams for our community.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Great. Thank you so much, Susan. And, um, that concludes our presentation for today. Um, and I believe I can turn it back over to Mark, um, for the next part of our meeting.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you. Thank you everyone. Um, just some housekeeping. Uh, just let the record show that Councillor Zondervan is tremendous as

well. He was here at roll call and the mayor and Councilor Nolan had to step out. I do have a couple, uh, questions that they sent me, um, that I will ask on their behalf later. But I want to get to, uh, public comments. Um, Madam Clerk, how many folks do we have?

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: Eight speakers have signed up.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: I'm sorry?

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: Eight speakers.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Eight? Okay. Um, so let's go to public comment. Um, for those, uh, you have three minutes. Please state your name and address for the record. Um, Madam Clerk, you, uh, manage this part?

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: Yes. The first speaker is Amanda Beatty.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Amanda Beatty, 604 Franklin Street, I'm a parent of a child at Amigos and one in private preschool. But I also don't think that after school needs to be a scarce resource. Why can't the city accommodate the needs of these families? Fourth, moving forward and building on the presentation today, it would just be helpful to just

encourage more transparency from DHSP. It would be helpful to to learn more about the number of children who applied and the spots for fall 2022 which you shared, but by school and by income level or whatever criteria you're using for prioritization. We haven't heard anything about them today.

Ashley Miller, 607 Green Street, The next speaker is Ashley Miller. We are very privileged and DHSP has really been an anchor for us in a very difficult time and I wish that that could be true for everyone in Cambridge. When we think about supporting staff, there was a mention of a new caregiver council. My six-year-old has incredibly benefited at MLK DHSP after school, Barbara Wilson, who we call Ms. Barbara, Mr. Isaiah, Ms. Katie, Mr. Paul, Kimberly, Mr. Mario. When we think about priority, we need to think about for which kids is the outside option not going to be safe and successful. While you're reaching out to teachers with help to advertise the program, you might also ask these teachers who are the kids who you're worried about when you see them leave school.

Abigail Starr, Richard Avenue in North Cambridge, my son will be starting kindergarten at Grandma Parks this fall. Next school year is one of the most stressful

uncertainties in our lives at the moment. If our son doesn't get a slot in the community school program or if he gets a spot and there's no transportation from school to his after school program, I have no idea what we'll do. So it means we really do depend on programs like these to be available and still be able to maintain to full time working parents.

Gilli Rosenzweig, Raymond Street, I'm a parent to three kids, two are attending the Raymond Parks after school. I'm here to thank you for the opportunity to discuss. I pay a significant amount and I do not receive receipts. So instead of putting a price tag for those activities and let a larger number of families cover the actual costs and families are willing to pay after school, are kept small and limited and then providing some activities with varied quality. So what kids get is low quality programming and sadly we're not making the most of the time and the amazing school facility is already available and I can show you hundreds of coloring pages my kids bring from community school. It is not art.

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: The next speaker is Sonali Dugo. Sonali, you have the floor.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Sonali Dugo is not on the Zoom.

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: Okay. The next speaker is Eugenia Schraa.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Eugenia Schraa, address not provided, I'm calling from my kids' preschool graduation, which I missed and as you can imagine that was pretty horrifying. I change these remarks based on Ellen's comments. While DHSP seems excited to get guidance from parents under the caregivers council, which is a great idea and I want to thank those putting in the work to make it happen. I regret sending my child there for two years. I have not seen that at DHSP. So how is DHSP gonna start being receptive to parents now? Parents not being paid taking time out of our day and see if it's talking about staffing or space.

Lilia Cardenas, 11 Tough Street, I'm one of the parents here at Cambridge. Already many of us feel invisible as parents and for you to only hear my voice and see my face, my facial expression and all of the things that go with speaking out is just not at all what I expected of an organization related to the city of

Cambridge.

Number two, we're not a family that couldn't handle this. Maybe one of the things to do is to say, let's hear what they have to say first because where is the real expertise? The real expertise is in the parent.

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: There are no more speakers signed up Counselor McGovern.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Okay, thank you. Um, can Rebecca-- okay, um, a couple of things just, um, before we go to questions, uh, and comments from the-- the committee. Um, in terms of-- just to address a couple of the last speakers in terms of scheduling, uh, this, um, that is not solely on DHSP. This was the council schedule, the clerk schedule.

Um, you know, we tried to find a time that the people who-- who needed to be here could be here. There's lots, this is not the only subject that is-- that the council and others are-- are meeting about. I'm sorry if it was inconvenient. We typically do these meetings from 5:30 to 7:30 and I can assure you that we get emails from people saying why don't you do these meetings in the morning because 5:30 to 7:30 I'm putting my kids to bed and I can't

attend the meetings

So, um, there was no intent on anyone's part to schedule this at an inconvenient time. Uh, it's-- it's the way it worked out and-- and there are probably some folks who are able to participate today who may not have been able to participate if we did it later. Um, and I apologize for, you know, any inconvenience that that-- that that caused, folks.

Um, okay, I want to go to, uh, questions and comments from the committee. Um, folks, if you just wanna raise your hand and-- in Zoom and I will call on you. I have a couple of questions from my own and someone from the mayor and Councillor Nolan who both had to leave for other-- other meetings. Uh, anyone on the committee like I have a question or comment?

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to, um, everybody who provided information for this presentation. I did have a couple of questions. Um, one is they're bound transportation. I know that that came up a couple of times during public comment.

Um, you know, I know that it's-- parents may be getting a space in after school which is great but if it is

a totally different school across town and they cannot-- we aren't providing transportation for that, um, that is a hardship and, you know, it's just not an option.

So I'm curious, are we guaranteeing-- as the city and the schools, are we guaranteeing transportation for students whose after school may be placed in a school that isn't their home school?

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Through you, Mr. Chair, let me start and then I'll hand it over to Michelle to give some more information. Um, what I would say is, um, as you know, the transportation in the city is actually provided by the schools, um, to and from and, um, you probably know this from your experience and the mayor-- I think the mayor is no longer here, but she could certainly also, um, speak to this issue, um, about what the schools, um, rules are, about which children are eligible for transportation, what the distance is, um, regardless of whether it's going to an after school program are going to um to and from home.

Um, we, um, endeavored to make it as easy as possible for families to understand when they were applying, um, where there are bus routes from the school that their

children currently will be attending to the after school program that they might be selecting.

And so if parents selected when they were applying for, um, the community school lottery, if they selected a school for which there is not transportation, then the application would pop up for them to be told that if they wanted to select that school, there was not transportation provided.

Um, the department does not provide, um, transportation, we don't have a system for providing transportation. We collaborate with the schools, work hard to understand what the school transportation is and that is the information that was provided.

But, um, the challenge you're pointing out is that there are schools for which if a parent-- if a child attends one school, there are some, um, after school programs for which there will not be transportation. Michelle, I don't know if you have anything else to add to that.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Can I just jump back for a second? Um, just to speak to your point. Like I'm thinking about, you know, if my kid goes to the Kennedy-Longfellow

and gets into an after school program at the King Open School, certainly it's appropriate for, you know, there's no-- there's not gonna be any transportation from the school because it's less than a mile or whatever.

But if I have a four-year-old who gets after school at the King Open school, there isn't gonna be transportation for that four-year-old and I'm not letting my four-year-old walk from Spring Street to the Cambridge Street location.

So I guess I'm-- I guess what I'm asking is, yes, I understand that the school department is the one that's responsible for the roots and how this all works. But how are we being creative with the school department to say this child is a Kennedy-Longfellow student? Is there somebody who's gonna be able to walk children from Kahlo to King Open?

So I'm just using that as one example or like, you know that the busses are driving right by from Kahlo to go to points further west in the city. Can that be worked out with transportation? Because I think part of what we're hearing is yes, there might be a spot for you but it may not be in a location where your kid can get to safely without someone in your family leaving work to get your

child to that location to participate in that after school.

So I just wanted to jump in and say like I understand the-- the school provides the transportation but how are-- how are we as a city being creative about fixing those holes for these families with transportation?

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Michelle, do you wanna?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Well, what I want to just offer is, you're right, Alanna, we don't have the school and the city-- we don't have any transportation and the school department does not provide transportation from every school to every other school. And a lot of that has to do with the release times of the different schools and the bus routes.

Um, so I understand that there's some-- some limiting factor about transportation. What we tried to do to help families this year with that problem was to identify for them which programs they could have transportation from. That's what Ellen was talking about.

So in the application process if you said my child goes to Kennedy-Longfellow, we provided a list of, so these are the DHSP locations for which you could get, um,

transportation from Kennedy-Longfellow. We gave you the list of schools, um, by us working with the transportation department.

So no, we haven't been able to create additional roots, um, or to do anything like that. But we were able to help families identify. Don't pick this school, don't pick the King Open because that's not a place that we can-- your kid could get transportation to.

So we don't have a solution to that as of yet, but we're trying to help families understand what the limits are.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Okay. One other thing, um, Councillor Mallon, which I would say is, and I think one of the complications for the school department and I can't really speak for them. But certainly a complication that I believe the school department and the school committee, um, spent a lot of time talking about is what was the perceived inequity between, um, providing transportation to an after school site and requiring children to walk home, um, so that if you're lucky enough to get a spot in an after school, you get transportation. If you don't have a spot in an after school but you would

be required to walk the same distance to get home. There isn't transportation.

And I believe one of the challenges for the school department was trying to figure out what it would mean to change the requirements for the distance that they would be prepared to transport children. And that it would mean that just children unless they were to completely change their transportation system, which clearly is something they were talking about, it would-- it would mean that children going in after school program would get transportation but children who needed to walk that same distance home wouldn't. And so I think that was among the challenges that the school department was facing and thinking about this in the school committee.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Vice Mayor, I thought Ms. Richards raised her hand.

MS. SUSAN RICHARDS: I just wanted to answer your question, Alanna, about creative workarounds that I think the school programs have also, um, in addition to these-- these what Ellen is sharing. There have been like long term creative workarounds to support the safety of children from programs that walk children.

For example, [inaudible 1:46:16] to the King Open and back, Arts-- and, you know, so on. So there's a lot of no-- nonprofits paying staff to walk and pick kids up or paying for vans and so forth. So it's a-- it's a-- it's a-- it's a-- it's a very long problem that is not-- has not been resolved. And because of the safety that you pointed out, there have been burdens placed on out of school time organizations to, um, address those issues. Um, and it's-- it is something that needs to be looked at systemically. Um, so we're not doing workarounds. We're really looking at the bigger issues.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I, you know, I think Susan brought up a good point about the East End House and the non-profits taking on that transportation role. I guess what I'm just asking is could DHSP also be thinking about those type of solutions for our families because just going back to-- and I don't want to belabor this, I don't have any kids at the Kennedy-Longfellow and they're not four-years-old, but if I was applying and to be able to get the transportation, I might be applying and being able to get into a community school after school that is much further from my house, that then

I don't have transportation to get to-- to pick my children up at the end of the day.

So I think there-- I just wanted to call that out as, um, a limiting factor that I think many of our families are struggling with, um, and will continue to struggle with. And I think as a council we would be very supportive of those creative solutions and finding funding, um, for staff to-- to be walking children to different locations.

So, um, that's just, uh, one thing I wanted to bring up. And then the other thing, Mr. Chair, for you is, I think the last time we had a conversation about this was trying to move 4th and 5th graders from the community schools into those youth center programs. How, um, how are we thinking about making that a really attractive move, right? Um, and getting-- I think I didn't even know about the youth centers until somebody who was like had kids that were older in the system that it was an option.

I just thought community schools until 5th grade and then new centers in middle school. How-- how are we like making them really attractive for families so that they're bringing up those community school spots? Um, I didn't know if somebody wanted to just quickly talk about that.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: I think one thing I would say is I think actually they are attractive, um, to many families and a few, um, look at the, um, families registering, um, and applying, um, to the youth centers. Um, we are seeing lots of families across the board who are, um, in that, um, entering 4th and 5th grade. And that's been true for quite a while.

Um, and I think that if-- as Michelle was describing, um, the, um, majority of the families seeking community school programs are in the JK through 2nd grade. And there's a very steep drop off in both 4th and 5th grade. And I think a lot more of those young people are applying to the youth centers and to other programs that serve, um, particularly if they've been in those programs. If families have been in programs since their Children were JK or K, by the time their children reached 4th and 5th grade, often they're looking for a different experience.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: I'm done. But I do see that Emie and Rachel, both their hands are up and if they had something to add,

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Excuse me. Emie?

MS. EMIE MICHAUD WEINSTOCK: Yes, so in hearing about

this, um, kind of conundrum or issue that's being brought up, um, I see an opportunity actually for where, um, the starting point is not where the discussion is happening here, but that this, you know, the starting point, um, is what caregivers are saying, um, that are needed and then to inform the solution.

Um, and so this is kind of like a case in point as to what, um, creating, um, agency, but also starting where, um, the problem and the issue arises and then going and getting feedback from those who are actually experiencing it and that is a-- that is a shift, right? It is a shift from here we are sitting and thinking about policy, um, in response to, uh, some members and thinking about actually if we are trying to systems change, well, then let's start with the way we're doing the system right now.

Um, and-- and so that-- that actually, um, this actually provides a very clear example of that co-creation and-- and agency, um, that is possible with this council. You all don't have to figure it out on your own, um, and shouldn't, so--

MS. RACHEL GRASHOW: Yeah, I just wanna-- I was-- I came away, um, from the comments with exactly what-- what

Emie was saying, The anger that I hear and the frustration, I think there are good intentions in this room to address these questions and to me this is-- this is an issue of lack of trust.

This is an issue of, you know, I think poor communication and not enough opportunity for stakeholders to speak and feel heard and a method to implement their feedback in a way that's thoughtful and again, actually notices that there are people missing from the room who's not here, right? For all the reasons that have been brought up today.

So again, this feels like another plug or more support for community feedback and buy-in. Um, and a way to do that, that's thoughtful. Um, understand, I also get frustrated when these meetings are during dinnertime. So in some ways there is no good way and the way to answer that is to have multiple to really double down on creating for-
- forums for people to-- to speak up and I-- I think there's-- there's a lot of chance for opportunity and I think these programs will be improved by getting feedback in a more systematic and thoughtful way.

Um, yeah, so thanks.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Yeah.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Okay, and just-- just real quick before I go to a Councillor Toner. Um, just in terms of getting feedback in these-- I mean, these meetings are clunky, right? I mean, there are certain rules in-- in-- in these meetings and, you know, I mean, we heard, you know, the concern about, we can't see the faces, you know, of when we do these Zoom meetings.

Um, you get three minutes, there's no dialogue back and forth. So, there has to be something in addition to this type of human services meeting, which is again, sort of has certain rules that it has to follow. And there's better ways, you know, uh, this could be one-- one-- one avenue, but actually, maybe taking-- taking some of these meetings out into the community, holding some of these meetings in schools, um, you know, so that people can, you know, can come and-- and do that as opposed to people coming to us doing that outreach. That's something just to think about.

Um, I have Councillor Toner, Councillor Zondervan, we have-- speaking of being clunky, we have 20 minutes. Um,

so, uh, Councilor Toner, you had your hand up first and then Councilor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR PAUL TONER: Thank you, Mr. chair. Um, just to this-- to the staff, I-- to answer the parents, I certainly feel the pain of the parents being someone who up until a few years ago relied on a lot of these services and after school programs as well.

Um, I'm just curious if in order to address the immediate need of these parents in the coming school year and over the summer, I realize it's-- it sounds like it's-- it's mostly space and staffing are a major issue. I mean, I'm sure the council would support providing more of the financial resources if that was the issue.

Um, but is there any possibility of us thinking out of the box with-- I, you know, you've heard me say it before, but I'm an admirer of the Wildflower Montessori schools in the model they use of taking, you know, retail, uh, first floor space on some of our main streets in our neighborhoods to provide their services.

I'm just wondering if there's any possibility of us developing some, uh, program that could have some neighborhood based spaces with certified and, uh, you know,

vetted, uh, adult support.

Maybe some of our high school students support to provide after school, uh, you know, a safe place with some interesting activities for, uh, these children and parents. Or is-- or is it really just that it's the difficulty of finding, uh, staff for-- for expanding the slots?

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Ellen?

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Chair, I can start and then perhaps Michelle or others, um, wanna answer. I would say, um, uh, the biggest issue, um, space is certainly an issue, but the biggest issue right now across the board as, uh, you are suggesting is actually a staffing issue and I think that's something that a number of the parents referred to, um, I think is also reflected in some of the hiring challenges.

And I want to say that it is not, for the most part, a funding issue. Funds are not irrelevant and for some of the community programs, funding may be more of an issue and I think we've spoken earlier about, um, some of the work that was done, um, in collaboration with the schools and under carries leadership with the schools in, um, providing more funding to programs who could take more children, um, um,

supported by the city.

Um, and we will continue to look at doing that same thing, but I think a number of the families talked about, um, some of what they had previously in place to provide support. Pre-pandemic, that was, um, um, really they didn't use the word destroyed, but I'm-- I'm struggling for the exact word that no longer existed, the kind of support.

And I think that one of the challenges is in the same way that families who might have been able to call upon, um, and higher individually support for their children and who are struggling now, even if they can afford it to find people who are available to do, it is a similar challenge that both the city programs and all the community programs are facing and that has a lot to do with who the staff are for those programs.

Many of those staff are our parents themselves, many of the staff have been deeply impacted by the pandemic. Um, many of the staff, um, are looking at, um, whether they want to be five days a week in a program with children versus what some of their own options maybe to support themselves.

So what I want to say is, um, we increased

significantly the rates that we were paying our part-time and full-time staff. Um, and it may be that as we move forward we need to take a look again at that. But I also want to say we also are looking at our community partners who also faced some of the same issues and, um, so I would say that is the biggest struggle space is not-- not an issue.

But even if you could magically locate as, you know, a storefront, actually finding licensing a program right now and finding staff, licensed staff to be able to do it, I think-- I think that that's possible for September, um, is pretty challenging. I'm not saying nothing could happen but I think that is something that would be extremely hard because if we could get those staff to come work for us. We're out there trying to hire them right now into a structure that probably would pay them more. Um, Michelle, did you want to add something?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: I think I just want to add a little bit of context to this. I know Amanda Beatty asked sort of what are the barriers and some of that we don't know. We-- we-- as, Ellen said, we raised the rates of our frontline staff, um, in order to both retain

folks and to attract new folks. When we came back to offering in-person programming last summer, we had lost 40 percent of our direct service staff. That's just DHSP.

And I think the numbers for the field are very similar. Khari offered some statistics and some information about nationwide that our field is facing a staffing retention and recruitment crisis in childcare.

This is from preschool, this is after school. We know this in-- in-- in school day classrooms as well. And so the pandemic really did a number on this field. And so we have been scraping, um, to get by in order to just provide the kind of care that we provided in the past that doesn't allow for any extra space.

And the-- the impact of that on the people who are providing the in person care is also challenging. And so we continue to have retention problems. Um, and so we are not yet out of this. Um, we don't see the way out yet. We are that, you know, any of you that do hiring understand the toll that hiring teams when you are continuously hiring and trying to, um, uh, orient new staff into programming with all of the rules and, you know, create the kind of relationships that we know that matter.

That takes time and sort of this idea that, um, because we need the spaces, we can just magically create them overnight. It does-- it's not so simple. It sounds like it's a simple thing but it's-- when we don't have enough staff, um, that is the greatest barrier that we are facing right now. So we can't talk about expansion until we can shore up and take care of the people who are currently in these, um, roles so that we can continue to do the jobs that we're, um, here to do. So it is staffing and space.

COUNCILLOR PAUL TONER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Mr. Toner?

COUNCILLOR PAUL TONER: I yield.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you. Just a time check. We have 11 minutes. Councillor Zondervan?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't take long, I don't have much to add, I feel, you know, my usual levels of frustration in these meetings because it doesn't seem like there's much we can do. Um, so I think, you know, maybe following Emie's advice here and-- and not trying to problem solve in this space, but-- but rather encouraging and supporting the problem solving spaces that are being set up so that we can get to some

solutions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you. Um, yeah. No, I agree. I mean, these meetings we-- we typically don't-- these are more providing information, sort of getting updates and then the real work is really happening outside-- outside of these meetings. Um, a couple of questions.

Um, the mayor's question was very similar to Councillor Toner's question, um, about staffing and funding and-- and-- and is it something that if the obstacle to finding staff is we're not paying enough, you know, is there something that the council can, you know, can do around that? But it sounds like it's more complicated, um, you know, more complicated than that.

Um, and then I'll go to Councillor Nolan's question in a second, but I do want to just sort of acknowledge the-- I think the frustration that everybody feels and I say this often that the timeline for bureaucracies and I don't mean that in a negative word, but, you know, governments, the timeline is never fast-- as fast as the people in need want it to be or needed to be, right?

And so I, you know, when we come forward in a meeting like this and-- and it's okay, we're gonna do this study to

gather all this information and that's gonna take a year, that maybe the total right thing, you know, and most appropriate and best practice and and thing to do.

As a parent who was wondering where my kid's gonna go for after school in two weeks, that frustrates the heck out of me because what am I supposed to do? So there is always, and especially when you're talking about, you know, education and school kinds of things where, you know, you-- you know, when you're rebuilding a school, you-- you have to relocate those children somewhere and it's really disruptive, but you can't have kids in a construction zone, right?

So there's always some-- things always take longer. And I just want to acknowledge that frustration and-- and that pain that people are feeling because I think it's-- it's-- it's real and how do we kind of, you know, move as quickly as we can, but also not cutting corners so that, you know, we end up maybe doing something that ultimately is not the best choice.

But I just want to acknowledge that-- that sort of frustration and-- and I think in terms of, you know, and this was something around the early childhood piece too. I-

- I think that for a lot of folks, I'll speak for myself, if-- if what gets presented from the city is information onslaughts dear, like that's capacity why staffing space just hard to manage that many, you know.

But over the course of the next three years, here's our plan to add, you know, on the, you know, slots per year saying we're-- saying with preschool like instead of saying, you know, okay, you know, we need, you know, here's our plan in the next five years. We'll have universal pre-K and we're gonna open X number of classes per year.

I think that may be frustrating to folks because if you need it now, but at least we feel like we're moving, right? At least we feel like there's a real plan to get going and-- and-- and I-- sometimes when-- the when, you know, hear that, it's-- it's like, well, here we are again, we're having another human services meaning about this. I've heard this stuff before.

Um, so I just want to acknowledge that frustration, but I also want to acknowledge the work that has been done because there were issues that were brought up last year, particularly around the lottery and when it was going to, you know, when people found out about their placements and

when the lottery was run and, you know, and DHSP and, you know, you-- you pivoted and you made changes and that is much better this year, um, than-- than-- than it was last year.

Um, a question that-- that Councilor Nolan had. Um, she said that a lot of the outreach and the focus is on CPS, Cambridge Public Schools but charter school kids who are almost all black and brown, low-income kids. Um, are we-- where do they fit into this picture?

Are they, you know, they're not really defined typically as CPS kids because, um-- so are they part of this conversation? And what does that look like in terms of their numbers?

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF: Um, sure, I can start and then, um, Michelle or someone else could provide an answer. Um, I think we had about, um, 30 or so kids who applied this time who are not Cambridge Public School students who applied as a piece of the lottery. But what I do want to say is, when we talk about low-income children, when we talked about our outreach, our outreach was to every family, um, served by the Cambridge Housing Authority. We did specific mailings to every family with a

Section 8, with children in the right age range within Cambridge and every family who lives in, um, subsidized housing.

So if families, um, who attend our charter schools or who attend private schools are low-income families, they should have received, um, outreach materials from us inviting them to apply. Um, and one other comment I want to make in response to what you were saying, Councillor McGovern, and I really appreciate the sense of urgency here.

And I do think that, um, Susan Richards made a comment which might have gotten a tiny bit lost in the, um, conversation here, which is that we don't see the work that we're doing in moving forward as, well, we'll just start a study and we'll start engaging with caregivers and then, um, we'll come talk to people about what's possible in, you know, April of next year.

It is our intention as we do the work. If there are things that we can move on and things that we can take action on, then we're not looking to wait, um, um, to take action and I would say that we are very clear. I'm, it's been true of this administration, um, from a, um,

administrative side and I anticipate it will be true when we have new leadership, that any time we have said that we need additional resources in order to be able to serve children and families, um, that council has always been receptive to that and the city administration has.

So if we are learning things in our work with caregivers and in our work with programs about what we might be able to do sooner, then we will definitely be looking at what it is that we can actually do. We don't anticipate that we're just going to do a study and then give a report at the end. Thank you,

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Khari? Muted. Khari, you're muted.

MR. KHARI MILNER: We try that again. Um, sorry, I'm also in a room that people need to get into. So let me try this quickly. Um, I was saying I address some of the questions about the charter schools real quick and then just pivot to something around the future. So one thing I'll mention is with the agenda for children, the different spaces we convene, um, we do and have had over a year-- the years different representatives from the charter schools come and be a part of our community.

And when that is done consistently, they really, um, become a part of our ecosystem. They, you know, become more aware of what they can be sharing with their parents, with their communities, with their kiddos. And that has allowed and enabled more of their families, young people to be aware of and participate, uh, in the different out of school time programs across the city.

Um, there are instances where they opt out or they don't have capacity and so there's kind of the need to build a bridge in both directions. And so I just want to point that out that they're very welcome. We bring them in. We have great people, I won't name them all because I don't want to contrast, you know, the different schools, but that's something that we have been working on and working with them on four years.

Um, in terms of like coming back to the Cambridge public schools, I just mentioned that to recognize the ongoing partnering, that in the intense labor it takes to kind of connect, you know, sort of this mismatch of, um, programs and schedules and staffing that we all know and experience over the years, like these systems were not built to be fully integrated, right? They were built to

sort of figure out, so how do we fill in the gaps? And unfortunately, it's still predominantly the same families and lived experiences that have the most opportunity gaps. Right?

And so I think at the end of the day, we have-- sounds like a lot of similar, um, not just emotions but beliefs around the importance of this work and the pandemic did amplify these things for us. For us, that this was always the issue, right? These issues have been huge since I've begun this work and as somebody who grew up in Cambridge and raising my family here, I still see the same trends of who leaves high school with access, with pathways, with opportunities to, you know, beautiful next chapters in their lives and who leaves high school kind of stuck.

And a lot of times that still is influenced by what that young person or what that family has access to our opportunities to do after the school bell or over the summer. And so we, as a community, as a city, can continue to push, we need to be committed to do this work and I think, you know, coming together and this kind of more institutionalized space, as you said, Marc, is-- can be tough in terms of the constraints, but the real work also

is on the ground. We'll continue to meet you all wherever we can to push for the growth of this system and I look forward to it.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you. Um, we are-- I'm gonna go by my computer clock, which I think is two minutes fast. Um, so we have like another minute or so, um, before we have to adjourn. Um, this is going to be an ongoing conversation, right? We clearly have a lot of work to do.

Um, we can do this in a number of-- have these conversations and I think we need to in a number of different venues and a number of different formats, this being just one. Um, uh, but would certainly love to work with DHSP, uh, on maybe how to roll this out, uh, into the community more and have more community meetings.

Um, I also wanna, uh, first of all, thank everybody, you know, for their work and-- and-- and for the folks who called in and shared their stories. Um, I do wanna have a conversation to around the questions that were raised by the SpedPack. Um, you know, it was Ellen, I think it was almost 17 or so years ago when more.

I was on Kids' Council with you. I think it was even before I was-- right around the time I first got elected

where we wrote the policy and recommended the policy that out of school time and after school be fully inclusive because 20 years ago they weren't fully inclusive. So this is something that I care deeply about and-- and-- and it's been sort of, you know, uh, an ongoing conversation for a long time.

So I think, um, whether we do that separately with the SpedPack or do it in another public meeting. Let's figure that out but I wanted to get those questions answered for them, uh, as quickly as possible. Um, and again, I have a number of questions but we're out of time, so that's what you get for being the chair and going last. I don't get to ask them but I'll find them out and share them with people.

Um, so again, thank you all so much for your work, thank you all so much for being here. Um, let's keep at it, let's keep plugging away, um, and get to the point where we can meet the needs of our goal as best we can. So with that, Madam Clerk, we are past time. We need a motion to adjourn on a motion by the mice mayor. Roll call.

CITY CLERK PAULA CRANE: On adjournment"

City Clerk Paula Crane called the roll:

Councillor Marc McGovern - Yes

Councillor Burhan Azeem - Yes

Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon - Yes

Councillor Paul F. Toner - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Yes-5, Absent-0. Motion passed

And the hearing is adjourned with five members, um, at
11:33 a.m.

COUNCILLOR MARC MCGOVERN: Thank you all very much,
appreciate it.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MICHELLE FARNUM: Thank you.

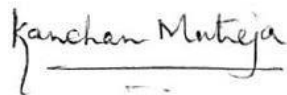
MR. KHARI MILNER: Thank you.

**The Cambridge City Council Human Services & Veterans
Committee adjourned at approximately 11:33 a.m.**

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, **Kanchan Mutreja**, a transcriber for Datagain, do hereby certify: That said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 30th day of March 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kanchan Mutreja". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Transcriber