

MINUTES

Community Relations Meeting School Committee Room 5/13/19

In Attendance:

Administration: Kathy Bodie

School Committee: Jennifer Susse, Len Karden, Jane Morgan, Jeff Thielman,

After-School Programs: Shirly Canniff, Mike Grossman, Matt Lauren, Todd Morse, Debbie Porthouse

Community: Ashutosh Gupta, Alham Saadat, other community members were present as well

Meeting Start – 6:36

We met with representative from the afterschool programs.

Issues raised by Parents and School Committee

- Waiting Lists - Several parents pointed out that waiting lists remain high across town.
- Buffer Zones – Some programs have their registration before the buffer zone deadline
- Busing – Often no bus that goes to after school programs across town (e.g., from Stratton)
- Community Relations – Some afterschool programs are more responsive to parents than others.
- For some schools, parents register by standing in line super early in the morning. Other schools have a rolling registration but then you need to be “in the know” to get your name on the list.
- Some programs still haven’t put their application, calendar and polices on line.

Program Responses

Shirley – From a program standpoint should prioritize siblings of current attendees.

Mike – Each room has age limits. When a space opens up it opens up at a specific grade level.

The Key constraint is space – Bracket recently lost one of the spaces we currently have, need to scramble for more. Need spaces that are licensable.

Ideally children should have some consistency. We don’t want children moving around to different spaces each day.

Matt pointed out that another difficulty is the low unemployment rate that makes it hard to staff programs. Have to ask whether they can provide the same quality if get bigger. They couldn't increase by 25% even if they had the space.

State Licensing – 1/13 ratio, and if a program has more than 53 students the coordinator can't count. State requires that each program have space that is "theirs"

Several programs pointed out the difficulty of sharing space with Kidzone and wondered if Kidzone could be more flexible in their use of classroom space.

Questions

Jane asked how space is allocated. Todd says it is different at each school. At Hardy they talk to teachers. At Bracket there's some push back from principal. Thompson principal chose specific classrooms that they could use. He suggests they share the "pain" on yearly (or half yearly) schedule. Too disruptive to shift each day.

Jeff spoke of the need to engage in a dialog about how space is used in our buildings

Jennifer asked how the increase last year has gone. Todd said that Thompson and Hardy increased from 100 to 160 and it has been harder to find quality staff.

There are currently 185 spaces at Dallin. They made it work. Every grade has a space. K/1 in Cafeteria. 5th grade has a classroom etc. Mostly they use common spaces.

At Stratton there are 130 per day (in 4 groups).

At Bishop K-2 is in the cafeteria, 3rd is on it's own and 4th and 5th are together.

Frustrations

Voting Day is really difficult.

Short day on Tuesday difficult. Professional development on Tuesday uses space and it is harder to find people to staff. Tuesday is also their most popular day.

Parents often ask for more time than they need, which produced last minute shuffles

Kathy talked about how difficult it is for teachers to share their learning spaces. Often they need to stay late to set up for the next day.

Meeting end 7:50 PM