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# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Sam Seidel  
City Councillor

March 3, 2011

The Honorable Margaret Drury  
City Clerk  
City of Cambridge

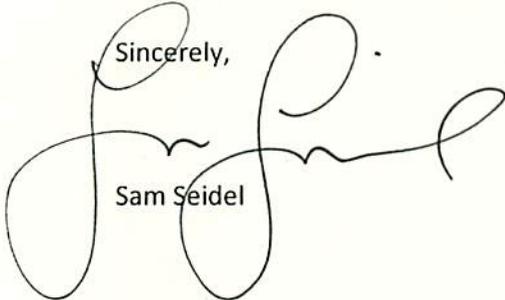
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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Margaret:

Attached is a communication from Nancy Tauber, School Committee member, and me to the City Council for the next Council meeting on Monday, March 7. It contains an update on the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Middle School Youth.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Sam Seidel



March 3, 2011

Dear Members of the City Council:

More than a year ago, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Middle School Youth issued a plan, *Shared Youth, Shared Strategies*, which outlined a city-wide approach to enhancing out-of-school-time (OST) opportunities for middle school youth and families in Cambridge. The plan grew out of a strategic goal adopted by both the City Council and the School Committee that would "ensure broad participation of Cambridge middle school youth in quality out-of-school time experiences that foster both their present and future learning and life success."

This goal was adopted because research points to the enormous benefits to students who engage in quality out-of-school time activities in terms of academic success, social and emotional competence, and physical health. Data also documents a decrease in less risky behaviors among youth who are participating in programs beyond the school day as well as during the summer time.

In the report, we noted that only approximately one-third of Cambridge middle school youth participate regularly in out-of-school-time programs and activities. That number has, and continues to increase over the past few years, in part due to three successfully launched Middle School Partnership (MSP) Programs: Kennedy-Longfellow/East End House MSP, King Open/Frisoli MSP and Peabody/Gately MSP). Still, we know that more needs to be done. That said, the plan outlined some next steps regarding this important work.

Our work has also progressed on a systems level thanks in part to a follow-up grant of \$117,000 from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation to continue some of the work outlined by the BRC. Staff from the Department of Human Services, the Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) and many community agencies have focused on the three systems-level strategies to achieve stated goals and objectives. These strategies include: community awareness and outreach; service delivery and coordination; and quality improvement. Current efforts include:

1. *Community Awareness and Outreach*

A pilot OST placement system program with 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at 3 schools began in the spring of 2010. At the Kennedy-Longfellow, King-Open and Peabody Schools staff from Human Services, community-based youth programs and the schools work with 7<sup>th</sup> graders on a mapping exercise where students list summer activities. The objective is to increase and enhance support of students by increasing access to summer opportunities through better collaboration between schools and OST programs.

2. *Service Delivery and Coordination*

Last year, a network of Middle School OST program providers was started. The Network aims to connect providers with one another to learn about best practices and improve outreach efforts to

middle school youth and families. One of the major findings of the BRC report was that there is less need for more out-of-school-time programs, but there is a definite need for improved coordination of existing resources.

Also, a city-wide data system has been implemented on a pilot basis at the Peabody School/Gately Middle School Program. YARDS (Youth and Resource Development System) will eventually be expanded district-wide to collect and analyze year-round enrollment data for all students. Through better data collection and analysis, the information gathered into YARDS will help document the impact of OST activities on student success.

### 3. *Quality Improvement*

To promote the critical work of strengthening existing and emerging structures within the schools, the City's Human Service programs and other community providers/agencies continue to foster both policy-level and program-level collaboration between schools, after school and summer programs in support of middle school students. Staff at schools and middle school OST programs worked together to learn about school curriculum and OST programming to give a broader understanding of a middle school student's development – both in and outside the classroom.

Out-of-School-Time programs also continue to work with Quality Coaches to continue to conduct program assessment and develop improvement action plans. An example of a summer initiative to enhance quality is the summer RAYSE program (Reinforcing Academics for Youth through Summer Enrichment) which embedded enrichment teachers to teach project-based-learning units into summer programs targeting middle grade students.

Funding from the Nellie Mae grant will end by June 30, 2011, but work will continue. Additional funding, however, is being sought because there is much more work to be done in this area.

Finally, School Superintendent Jeff Young's "Innovation Agenda" a proposal for the Cambridge Public Schools, highlights similar points to those made in the *Shared Youth, Shared Strategies* report. We are encouraged by the recognition of the importance of middle school out-of-school time activities to the overall success of middle school students. Specifically, one of the six components of the Innovation Agenda includes an expansion of "out-of-school time opportunities supported by consistent school start/end times." Dr. Young has already met with out-of-school time providers to understand the number of current program offerings as well as identify ways in which middle school-based programming could be enhanced. There clearly are exciting opportunities for collaboration between CPS, Human Services programs and non-profit providers to reach more students. Please see the Innovation Agenda if you'd like more information of this particular plan component.

Attached you will find a print-out of a recent presentation made to Superintendent Jeff Young, Deputy Superintendent Carolyn Turk and Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Ellen Semonoff, which provides a summary of recent BRC work. In the meantime, please feel free to contact either one of us if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Sam Seidel

Co-Chairs, Blue Ribbon Commission on Middle School Youth



Nancy Tauber

# **Shared Youth, Shared Strategies**

*Update on Progress and Next Steps*

January 7, 2011

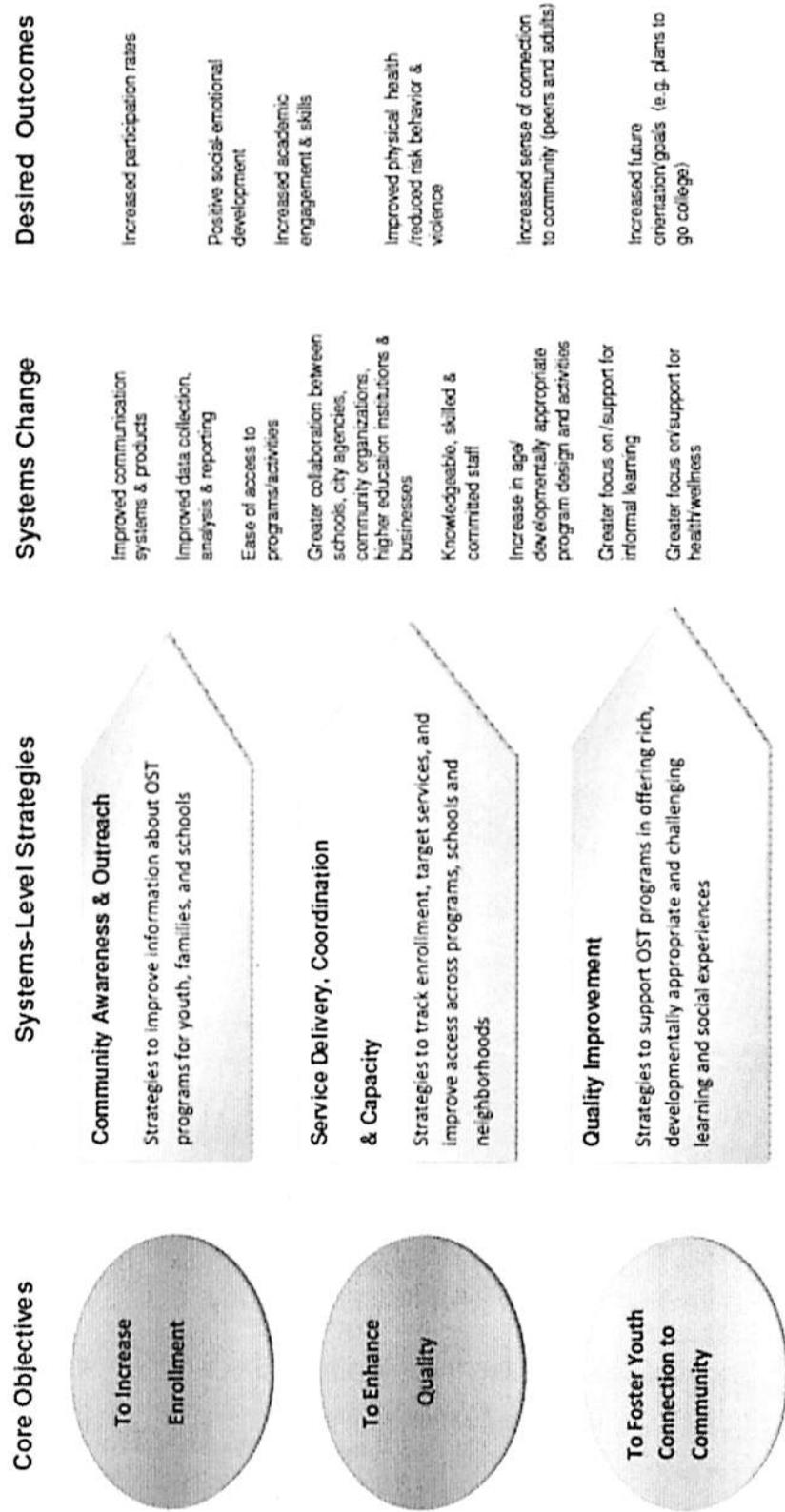
## ***City-Wide Goal:***

*To Ensure Broad Participation of Cambridge Middle School Youth in Quality Out-of-School Time (OST) Experiences that Foster Both Their Present and Future Learning and Life Success*

# June 2009: The Original Plan

## Shared Youth, Shared Strategies: Strategic Plan At-A-Glance

**Citywide Strategic Goal:** *To ensure broad participation of middle school youth in quality out-of-school-time experiences that fosters both their present and future learning and life success.*



# Community Awareness and Outreach

*Strategies to improve information about OST programs for youth, families, and schools*

## OST Placement System

- 2010: Summer Opportunities Pilot – mapping workshops and limited case management with 7<sup>th</sup> graders in 3 schools
- 2011: Expanded efforts in 3 schools with earlier start and more intensive staffing and follow through

Systems Change(s): Improved communications systems and products;  
Increased collaboration; Increased access to summer opportunities

## Social Marketing/Public Awareness

2010: Focus groups at 3 summer programs → emerging themes, early stage marketing plan

2011: Increased engagement with families as part of OST Placement System, potential opportunities for youth leadership and participation

Systems Change(s): Improved communications systems and products; Greater focus on/support for informal learning

# **Service Delivery and Coordination**

*Strategies to track enrollment, target services and improve access*

## **Develop a Network of Middle School OST Programs**

- 2010: Launch of Cambridge Middle School Network (MSN) – 13 members to date with agreed upon criteria and capacity to serve 750+ youth
- 2011: Continued development of MSN with enhanced focus on coordination and access, quality improvement and development of OST portfolio

**Systems Change(s):** Greater collaboration; Increased knowledge and communication; Improved data collection

## **Create a City-Wide Data System to Track Participation**

2010: Collected and analyzed summer and fall enrollment data

2011: YARDs pilot at Peabody/Gately MSP, expanded collection and use of data

**Systems Change(s):** Improved data collection, analysis and reporting; Greater collaboration

# Quality Improvement

*Strategies to support OST programs in offering rich, developmentally appropriate and challenging learning and social experiences*

## Identify Quality Guidelines and Promote Best Practices

- 2010: ISAS participation and quality coaching at multiple sites, QPG focus on Middle School initiatives, collection and use of SAYO data at MSP sites
- 2011: Enhanced focus on shared professional development and adoption of quality guidelines

**Systems Change(s):** Increased staff knowledge and skill; Developmentally appropriate program design and activities

## Enhance the Quality of Academic Enrichment and Support by Strengthening CPSD-OST Collaboration

2010: RAYSE summer programming, CPSD faculty involvement in MSP sites, CPSD content-area trainings for OST staff

2011: Increased focus on shared CPSD-OST professional development

**Systems Change(s):** Increased staff knowledge and skill; Developmentally appropriate activities; Focus on/support for informal learning

# Middle School Network

## *Membership to Date*

- Breakthrough Cambridge
- CitySprouts
- Community Art Center/Teen Media Program
- Youth Opportunities (East End House)
- Frisoli Youth Center
- Gately Youth Center
- Maud Morgan/Agassiz Baldwin
- Media Arts Studio
- Office of Workforce Development
- Project MOVE
- Science Clubs for Girls
- The Work Force
- Tutoring Plus

# Middle School Network

## *Membership Criteria*

1. We maintain active engagement in the MSN community
  - Meetings; Wiki; Visiting & hosting; Sharing practices & resources
2. We share and use data
  - Data collection & submission; Data analysis
3. We strive to coordinate services and promote the Network based on the needs of the youth
  - Program information updating & sharing; Each program as entry point; Supporting youth navigation & access; Tracking of youth; Participation in events
4. We are committed to ongoing professional development and quality improvement
  - MS-specific focus; Hosting/inviting members; Research & sharing of practices

# Summer Opportunities 2010

## *Placement Workshops Data*

- 93.5% (144) of 7<sup>th</sup> graders (154) completed a map
- 76% (109) of students that completed a map identified participating in some kind of ASOST activity during the school year
- 62.5% (90) of students that completed a map named at least one program they planned to take part in during the summer and an additional 10% (15) identified travel as their sole summer plan
- 41.6% (64) of students participated in at least one (of 14) reporting program for some part of the summer; 11 of those 64 participated in two of the reporting programs

# Summer Opportunities 2010

## *CPS Data*

- 40.4% (476/1178) of all CPS 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated in at least one (of 14) reporting program
- 6<sup>th</sup> Graders: 40.1% participation (159/397)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: 34.2% participation (139/406)
  - 41.6% participation at 3 Summer Opportunities schools
  - 29.8% participation at other 8 CPS
- 8<sup>th</sup> Graders: 47.5% participation (178/375), of which 145 participated in MSYEP alone

# Summer Opportunities 2010

*Participation by School (in one of 14 reporting programs)*

School	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>
Amigos	47.8%	44.0%	55.0%	48.5%
Baldwin	42.9%	34.1%	38.1%	38.1%
Cambridgeport	58.1%	41.9%	50.0%	50.0%
Fletcher Maynard	29.4%	35.3%	41.2%	35.3%
Graham & Parks	29.3%	14.6%	35.7%	26.6%
Haggerty	45.8%	-	-	45.8%
Kennedy-Longfellow	47.5%	34.5%	53.3%	44.3%
King	52.6%	29.4%	42.1%	41.8%
King Open	41.7%	39.6%	42.6%	41.3%
Morse	26.3%	27.9%	45.5%	32.5%
Peabody	33.3%	43.1%	61.0%	45.8%
Tobin	38.1%	40.0%	51.7%	43.8%

# Summer Opportunities 2011

## *Draft Placement System Timeline*

- January/February:
  - Meet with principals at King Open, Kennedy Longfellow & Peabody to share 2010 data and develop 2011 timeline
  - Identify and recruit School-based and OST-based Placement Liaisons
  - Finalize Middle School Summer 2011 Resource Guide
  - Develop workshop structure
  - Meet with school and OST teams
  - Determine Camp Night presence
- March/April:
  - Camp Night
  - Summer Opportunities workshops/events with youth and families
  - “Case management” follow-up with targeted youth and families
  - Applications distributed
- May/June:
  - Applications due
  - Initial enrollment collection from summer programs
  - Summer Opportunities workshop follow-up