

West Hartford Public School District

Agenda Item: Impact of the Elimination of the K-8 Summer School

Meeting Date: December 6, 2011

From: Tom Moore, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Through: Karen L. List, Superintendent

Background:

The K-8 Summer School program's expenses have exceeded income for many years. This report looks at the implications of eliminating the program.

Description of the Summer K-8 Program

The K-8 Summer School has been in existence for over thirty years in somewhat different formats. At its peak in the early 1990's, the program enrolled about eight hundred students and offered two back-to-back, four-week morning sessions with connections to four different parks programs and other activities run by The Bridge Family Center. The second four-week session was eventually shortened to three weeks and then discontinued in 2004 due to decreasing enrollment, and afternoon parks activities were limited to Kennedy Park for elementary-school-age students only. Enrollments have continued to decline, with 337 students attending in 2009, 306 students in 2010 and 252 students in 2011.

The program has always offered a mix of academic skill development and enrichment activity courses, including arts, music, theatre, science exploration, technology, crafts and physical education. There is also a pre-kindergarten program for ages 3-5 run separately at Whiting Lane School. All courses are taught by certified staff, most of whom are West Hartford teachers. The school day runs from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., for four weeks that begin soon after the school year ends. Bus transportation is provided; this year an additional \$60 was charged for busing. The program is marketed to surrounding towns, and 35-50 students attend yearly from outside of West Hartford. Tuition for a full morning runs between \$500 - \$550. The Board of Education provides \$9,000 yearly for student financial aid for those who cannot afford the program.

Financial Implications:

The chart on the next page summarizes the financial performance of the Summer K-8 Program. Cumulatively through June of 2008, the program had lost \$408,420 through the previous 15-20 years. To provide the program with a fresh start, surplus funds that had been built up in other

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Special Fund programs was reallocated to wipe out that accumulated deficit. The chart below reports on the performance of the program in the four years since the accumulated deficit was wiped out - the Summer of 2011 results are estimated. In total the program has lost \$277,231 over the four years. In 2009 and 2010, program revenues were barely over half of program expenses. Some economies were made in the Summer of 2011, but the program is estimated to lose \$64,000 and revenues amounted to about 66% of expenses.

Summer of	Starting (Deficit)/Surplus	Revenues	Expenses	Yearly (Deficit)/Surplus	Ending (Deficit)/Surplus
Cumulative through June 2008	(\$408,420)	\$408,420	\$0	\$408,420	\$0
Summer of 2008	\$0	\$174,499	\$200,136	(\$25,637)	(\$25,637)
Summer of 2009	(\$25,637)	\$128,975	\$219,301	(\$90,326)	(\$115,963)
Summer of 2010	(\$115,963)	\$127,090	\$224,358	(\$97,268)	(\$213,231)
Summer of 2011 (est)	(\$213,231)	\$127,000	\$191,000	(\$64,000)	(\$277,231)

The K-8 Summer Program operates in a competitive market place for youth summer activity programs. Program prices are currently competitive with other offerings in the marketplace, and it would difficult be to raise them by the 50% needed to break even. Enrollment has declined in recent years as more families look for full day programming rather than half day programming and for programming that can be purchased in week at a time, rather than 4 weeks at a time. It is difficult to envision an enrollment increase large enough to reach a break-even status, financially. Expenses are difficult to trim further as the teacher labor rate is set contractually and other costs have been trimmed significantly.

The program will continue to be a significant cost. It will likely lose \$50,000 to \$70,000 per year.

Were the program to close, the deficit would vanish. There are some allocated costs that would not disappear. However, savings from adjustments in the other remaining 3 Continuing Education programs (9-12 Summer School, LifeLearn, and Mandated Adult Education) would offset those legacy costs.

Alternatively, the K-8 Summer Program could continue, but it would require yearly infusions of funds from the Board to avoid increasing the deficit.

Special Education Implications

Of the 104 students with special needs who attended the separate program run by Pupil Services at Sedgwick, approximately 45 of them attended classes in the regular education program there. At Whiting Lane, approximately 30 of the 74 special needs students there attended the regular education classes for at least part of the morning. This is an ancillary benefit of the K-8 summer program in that it provides an inclusion element that would not exist otherwise.

Mr. Moore, Mr. Downes, and Mr. Ward will be available to answer questions.