

City Administration Update: Initiatives to Support CPS Response to COVID19

March 8, 2021

Economic Growth Committee

I. CITY / CPS INTERACTION

The City Administration and the Mayor have made themselves available since last Spring to assist Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) with the transition to fall and digital programming, from offering the utilization of space at Rec Centers, an expedited permit process for expanding CPS facilities to a range of supplemental support efforts

- The City immediately created the Safe and Healthy Schools program in summer 2020, allowing CPS to receive expedited approvals to expand their facilities and we continue to stand ready to support this in any way
- To support Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) fully remote start to the school year, the Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC) continues to offer all day childcare, 7am to 6pm, at 18 facilities; and, after-school care, 2pm-6pm, at 4 additional locations
- Administration requested CPS help promote the program to their families, and to contribute funding to defray the cost of recreation operational expenses to include recreation center wi-fi upgrades. The Administration had several calls with CPS Administration and responded in writing to answer questions. CPS did not respond to the City Administration request
- The City of Cincinnati is committed to supporting Cincinnati Public Schools as they continue the transition back to in person learning. A successful partnership always requires mutual effort and cooperation by both parties

II. CURRENT STATUS OF CPS

Most Schools Hybrid, Walnut Hills Fully Remote, Further Decisions Expected March 15

- Most schools in the district are currently doing some form of blended learning
- Walnut Hills High School is still not back for in person classes, which has caused a great deal of concern / consternation amongst students, parents, and supporters of the school
- Some children in the district have had less than 20 days, or even fewer, of in-person classes this entire school year
- An unknown number of families and students have left the district entirely; this was recently expressed by the Board as a significant concern going into next school year
- While the City does not exercise oversight over the schools or the independent School Board, we do view ourselves as an important partner with a vested interest in the success of the schools
- The city benefits greatly, and even depends on, a strong and fully functioning public school system
- The city wants to assist with this effort in a safe and expeditious manner as it is in the benefit of the entire community to have schools that are open at this time

III. DIRECT OUTREACH BY CMO to CPS

In July and August of 2020, the City Manager reached out in writing and via phone to offer support to CPS for a reopening plan and support

- On August 17th, 2020, the City Manager reached out to the school Superintendent to discuss a partnership and offer a range of assistance to CPS on a range of fronts
- The city followed up in writing with answers to specific questions, additional relevant information, and continued offers of assistance. CPS did not respond, despite further City follow up inquiring into the status of their consideration of a partnership.
- We are where we are today, with the COVID pandemic starting to recede and more people in our community, especially educators, being vaccinated. We at the City would reiterate our offers of assistance to get schools open for in-person learning
- The preponderance of the studies and data nationally shows that in-person learning can be done and done safely with a variety of precautions and vaccinated teachers and staff
- Most of the City offers of support were not followed up on or rebuffed. We at the City are not entirely sure why but remain willing to help in any way
- There has been informal cooperation throughout the year between CPS and CRC, but nothing formalized or sustained

IV. SUPPORTING AND PARTNERING WITH CPS ON REOPENING

SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

- To allow existing schools providing pre-K through 12 grade instruction to temporarily expand their facilities for the 2020/2021 school year, the City launched the “Safe and Healthy Schools” program
- The “Safe and Healthy Schools Program” provides emergency relief from city land use regulations in order to address public health concerns at schools
- Launched August 6, 2020, following the joint emergency order No. 13, issued by Mayor John Cranley and City Health Commissioner Melba R. Moore and still in effect
- We continue to encourage CPS to avail themselves of this program to make their facilities as safe as possible for learning
- As CPS looks to go back to an in-person or hybrid model, we remain more than happy to assist as we have done with private schools in the jurisdiction

V. CRC PROVIDED CHILDCARE

ALL-DAY CHILDCARE SITES

- The Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC) launched registration August 21, 2020 in order to provide an option for those struggling with all day childcare needs as CPS went fully remote. This program is still open through March
- This program has been taking up to 500 students safely city-wide and has been widely utilized through this school year
- Each facility serves as a food distribution site, serving CPS school breakfasts and lunches to all program participants
- Masks and temperature checks are required for entry at each facility and physical distancing guidelines are observed with no more than 15 youth per room at any given time
- 11 facilities accept Ohio Department of Job and Family Service vouchers through the Publicly Funded 2 Child Care (PFCC) program with 7 other locations charging \$150 per week, per child, for enrollment. Only a portion of the voucher covers the total cost accrued by CRC for all-day childcare. It costs \$32k per week to offer the program, not covered by voucher subsidy
- Again, CRC stands prepared to continue the program as circumstances continue to evolve and change going forward, including during the summer months

VI. SUPPORTING AND PARTNERING WITH CPS ON REOPENING

ALL-DAY CHILDCARE SITES REMAIN OPEN THROUGHOUT THE CITY WITH ADDITIONAL CAPACITY TODAY

- **All Day Childcare voucher sites:**
Bond Hill, Bush, Coryville, Evanston, Lincoln, Madisonville, McKie, Millvale, Price Hill, Sayler Park, and Winton Hills
7am-6pm, Monday – Friday
Weekly fees vary per site based on state ratings
- **All Day Childcare non-voucher sites:**
Clifton, College Hill, Dunham, Hirsch, Oakley, Pleasant Ridge, and Mt. Washington
7am-6pm, Monday-Friday
\$150/child/week
- **Afterschool care only sites:**
Hartwell, LeBlond, North Avondale, and Westwood Town Hall
2pm -6pm, Monday – Friday
\$65/child/week

VII. SUPPORTING AND PARTNERING WITH CPS ON REOPENING / WIFI

CINCINNATI BELL WIFI PARTNERSHIP

- CRC rapidly developed a short-term and long-term plan for WiFi access at CRC centers in order to accommodate the remote learning needs of CPS students
- To ensure that students can securely connect to their virtual classrooms, CRC partnered with Cincinnati Bell to purchase WiFi access points for its facilities
- Estimated cost for the one-time installation fees to permanently wire and install 21 Centers with new access points and needed equipment was \$120k, which the City of Cincinnati has underwritten
- Completed and fully operational Wifi: Clifton, Oakley, Saylor Park, Mount Washington, Bush, McKie, Corryville, Evanston, Millvale, Bond Hill, Price Hill, Westwood Town Hall, and Hartwell are now complete
- Permanent wi-fi upgrades in 21 recreation centers were completed in November 2020 to facilitate learning and childcare during the pandemic
- We are deeply appreciative of the support of Cincinnati Bell in completing this initiative

Summary

- The City of Cincinnati stands committed to supporting Cincinnati Public Schools, and to working with community and economic partners to tackle the public health and economic impact of COVID19
- The City of Cincinnati believes the city as a whole is well served by a safe and functioning and open school system
- Residents seeking more information about City's efforts to combat COVID19 are encouraged to visit the City's website at: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/covid19/>

THANK YOU

Q&A