



City of Cambridge

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IN CITY COUNCIL
February 13, 2023



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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To: Cambridge City Council
From: Sumbul Siddiqui, Mayor
Date: February 9th, 2023
Subject: Communicating Information from Mayor Siddiqui about Universal Pre-K

The UPK Ad-Hoc has met six times to discuss strategies developed for implementing universal Pre-K. The Office of Early Childhood provides updates and recommendations from the workforce development, program quality, and family hub task forces and the family survey and program capacity survey.

The School Committee passed a [Motion C22-247](#) to ask the Superintendent to inquire on how to lower the entry age for students entering CPS and to separate Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten classrooms. Dr. Greer is working with the Office of Early Childhood and the registration center to understand how to create a single application for entry into CPS. These policies have been passed to a second reading and will be back to the School Committee on March 7.

This past fall, the workforce development, program quality, and the family hub task force groups provided a list of recommendations to be considered when implementing UPK.

The workforce development group suggested implementing a teacher pathway program, ensuring all educators have a BA in either child development, early childhood education, or special education. Classrooms should be no more than 18 students a class. Teachers should be provided equitable pay standards that address pay parity. There should also be additional professional development opportunities and a cohort model for peer and professional support.

The program quality task force recommends equitable and accessible program standards including guiding principles that will incorporate equity-driven, culturally responsive, transparent and accessible shared understandings of high quality and guiding principles that

incorporate anti-bias/anti-racist tools and inclusive practices. This will include no suspension and expulsions. In addition, programs will adopt guiding principles that incorporate play as an essential element of young children's learning, encourage relationships and honor the uniqueness of each child. Programs must implement a research-based curriculum that is responsive to children's interest, curiosity, and developmental needs.

The Family Hub recommends creating a one single application for enrollment that will guarantee placements for all children who are four-year-olds by August 31st. Also, the need for alignment and community for UPK teachers and CPS Kindergarten teachers

The Office of Early Child is in the process of analyzing the data from the Family Survey and will report back findings and recommendations that appear from the survey. As of December 6th, 2022, **244** eligible parents or guardians started the survey. With **103** currently having children in preschool, **73** are looking at preschool options, and **68** recently navigated preschool (children are now in grades Kindergarten to year 3). More information regarding the family survey will be released following the next UPK Ad-Hoc meeting on February 3rd.

The program capacity survey gathered 40 program respondents. The Office of Early Childhood is currently meeting with key program partners to identify program opportunities and needs. Reporting and analysis of program capacity is ongoing, and we will continue to have conversations until all partnerships are finalized.

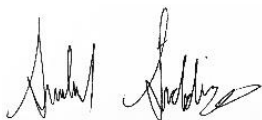
The City and school IT departments have met to determine a strategy for procurement and management of the technology behind the UPK application process. It is recommended that OEC be the primary office that manages the system since about 80% of children applying through the system will be placed in city and community-based programs.

Several partnerships are being created with the OEC. Lesley University and OEC are hosting the 2023 annual Week of the Young Child event. OEC will support the placement and payment for students in RSTA's ECE program for Spring 2023.

Next steps for the UPK Ad-Hoc and the Office of Early Childhood include completing the data collection and identifying partner programs, hiring key OEC staff, including an [UPK Program Manager](#), building out a single application and enrollment system, and creating a communications strategy for families.

The Ad-Hoc videos can be found on the [website](#). The next UPK Ad-Hoc meeting will happen on March 16th, 2023. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui