

City of Hyattsville Education Advisory Committee
February 4, 2021, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Virtual Public Meeting on Zoom
Open to the Public

Attendees: Melinda Baldwin, vice chair; Jan Edwards; Candida García; Jen Kubit; Cynthia Totten; Mai Abdul Rahman, co-chair; T. Carter Ross; Michelle Thornton, co-chair.
Council Liaisons: Councilmember Bart Lawrence
City Staff: Brayan Perez, Saarah Abdul-Rauf
Guests: Maira Deloa, Mayor Kevin Ward
Regrets: Councilmember Dan Peabody

Co-Chair Michelle Thornton called the meeting to order at 6:35.

Approval of past minutes

The minutes as amended, for December 2020 and January 2021 were approved on a voice vote.

Educational Enrichment Grants 2020

Perez reported that Council approved the 2020 grants, as proposed by the Committee in January. Applicants will be contacted and funds delivered this month. Council also approved the Committee's request to reserve the remaining funds, and will await a recommendation from the Committee following its March meeting with area principals regarding how the funds can be put to use. Council wants to make sure the money is used in an equitable manner to benefit multiple schools.

Committee Handbook

Perez shared that Council approved a new committee process and handbook. Existing members whose terms had expired or were near expiration were extended through April 2021. Going forward, committee members will have staggered terms, committee chairs will have term limits, and a new process for seating and orienting new committee members and new reporting requirements will be instituted.

City Youth Programs Update

Abdul-Rauf informed the Committee that the Teen Center is now doing Zoom-based tutoring three days a week, serving about 25 students each evening. Once in-person schooling returns, an online tutoring will remain available although there is hope that, when safe, some in-person tutoring can resume. Abdul-Rauf noted that while the City has enough tutors to meet current needs, she would not turn down more volunteers. Perez noted that the City can make a new effort to recruit community volunteers and highlight that there is a need for both short- and long-term commitments. Spanish-speaking tutors are a plus.

For Spring camps, the City is planning an online option, a DIY home kit option, and, if possible, an in-person field trip option. Current planning is for a limited-in-size in-person summer camp for younger kids. The Creative Minds toddler and parent program is going

on right now and is completely full, but three public events are planned for anyone who can attend (in March an ASL interpreter will teach signs for little people along with reading a related book).

Perez also noted that the City plans to hire a new bilingual communications specialist. This should give him a chance to expand interactions with the schools' Parent Engagement Advisors, which will help better connect City staff with students and school needs. This has been lost some due to the pandemic.

Kubit asked about the need for helping students with college applications. Abdul-Rauf said that they have been able to pair juniors and seniors with tutors who can address those specific needs (application essays, SAT testing, etc.)

March 4, 2021 Principal's Meeting

Perez noted that during the January meeting a scope was laid out for the meeting. Co-chair Abdul Rahman asked Abdul-Rauf if she had insight into potential needs/deficits that the City could augment. She noted that the pandemic has complicated things a lot, and the Teen Center does try to help with needs beyond just academic needs. For her, the principal meeting will be important in building connections with area principals, which will help direct future decisions. One concern is how the reintroduction of in-person learning will be managed in terms of social-emotional needs.

Perez said he is reaching out to principals in the coming week and is hopeful that most of the area schools will be represented. A draft of the invite will first be circulated to the committee for approval.

Dan's Letter of Service

Perez will draft this next week and circulate to the committee. Discussion followed about achievements during former Chair Broder's term. Among the items mentioned were his engagement with Northwestern students who submitted a large number of EEG applications and the organized a community supply drive for the Northwestern Evening High School.

Adjournment

The committee set March 4 for its next regular meeting, which will include the meeting with area principals, before adjourning at 8:00 p.m.