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## WHAT DOES AN IDEAL OST DELIVERY SYSTEM LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

Affordable  
City-wide  
Comprehensive  
Joyful  
Nurturing  
Cost-reduced  
Enriching  
Inclusive  
Innovative  
Collaborative  
Student-led initiative  
Programs are not competing against one another.  
Empowering  
Structured fun

### Temperature check:

- Various members across city and school positions have gratitude for the existing programs and report that families are generally happy with what is available if families actually get access to programs.
- There are some structural barriers in OST service delivery:
  - The K-8 model of schooling creates barriers to OST for middle schoolers (grades 6-8), unlike the high school that is centralized where all kids in our community can access those activities.
  - Transportation is not provided and clusters of students are at different schools across the city. MBTA passes are now provided for middle schoolers but some families have expressed frustration that the programming schedule has not matched the school and bus schedule. **Need more coordination on program planning.**
  - Lack of state and federal infrastructure is a theme.
  - Department structures in our City government seem to compete against one another which makes it more difficult to create collaborative and comprehensive services available, and reduces inclusivity.
    - Cabinet is allowing us to talk across departments and we should leverage more in including community partners.

## Addressing Barriers:

### - Registration:

- Accessing the online registration system can be a barrier.
- Timing of PK/K after school enrollment in January occurs before families may even be engaged with Somerville Public Schools.
  - Emphasizes the need for outreach to immigrant families and newcomers.
  - Transportation limitations are concentrating students on waitlists at certain schools.
- Language access challenges persist outside of city/school-supported programming.
  - In-person multilingual enrollment and activities inventory were very successful last year and should be a key component of our framework moving forward.

### - Coverage:

- Before-school-time is not covered and challenging for families.
- The school-time ending of community schools is earlier than most parents' work days.
- The gap between when parents need to leave for school drop-off and when they need to arrive at work is almost as long as the gap between the end of the school day and the end of their work day.
- Stop-gap measure: programming now and the end of this summer

### - Cost:

- Affordability of the programs is a huge barrier despite cost-reduced slots offered.
- Providing cost-reduced or full tuition assistance to families would be helpful, especially reserving these with partners ahead of their open enrollment.

### - Capacity:

- There are not enough slots for all children to attend, yet the number of slots has expanded significantly in the past few years.
- First come first serve is emphasizing outreach barriers. We need to prioritize more fore-running outreach. For example, we need to begin outreach sooner because summer camps are already full.
- We need to dedicate OST slots to families that may need more time to access registration (language, digital and outreach confound this access).
  - SomerPromise paid to hold slots in our partner centers to reserve them for our financial assistance participants prior to applications opening.
  - A successful model will include reserving affordable spots in OST before registration opens.

- **Space:**

- Identifying space availability is really difficult because of lack of collaboration between space owners.
- Timing restrictions for spaces create less time to deliver services.
- School principals are often not included in the OST programs that use their school site and do not have an integrated vision of OST within the school.
  - We need to collaborate with school leaders before the school year or summer programming starts.
  - Intentionality and ownership needed from both city and school – these are *our* kids.
  - Engage in a larger strategic plan: capacity, space, safety inventory to build authentically mixed delivery system

- **Staffing**

- Staffing capacity is limiting the capacity of staff to deliver services and expand the services to additional sites.
- Need for training for OST staff in prevention and referring students to community resources; these staff tend to be early in career and have less experience.
- Collaboration is hindered because a single person cannot work in multiple city departments – creating a cross-department full time position may solve many staffing challenges.
- Applications to open positions in SPS, the City and community-based organizations are mainly coming from people living outside of Somerville, even though salaries seem competitive. The cost of living in Somerville is contributing to staffing shortage
- The Mayor's Jobs Program is such a great opportunity for thinking about how we can expand to more community partners using the "cheat sheet" *and* fill staffing gaps.

- **Special needs:**

- Not all sites and staff are equipped to provide the services needed.
- Programs and/or staff may not be able to support special needs participants in upcoming OST and summer programs. Concern over what the Special Education Dept is planning for SY24 under direction of the new superintendent.
- CPPI partner feedback indicates that support provided by the grant expanded staff capacity for IEP students.
  - Director mentors
  - Peer-learning opportunities
  - Social workers and behavior therapists
  - In the future: itinerant speech specialist
- We can use this as a model to create a system of support for OST providers empowering them to take on students with IEPs.

- Principals may not have a unified vision with either OST or SpED in their schools. Other school leaders such as parents may also be important collaborators in solving OST gaps for students with special needs.
- **Transportation:**
  - Pilot Program: “All City Middle Grades Program” for Robotics was very successful.
    - Accounted for travel time and made a difference in improving attendance
    - Included flex time activity to account for waiting for the program to begin.
    - Ensured we have outreach and participation from every school in the district.
- **Student Voice:**
  - Need for programs with both structured and drop-in activities
  - Kids want a space for children to speak up for themselves
  - The Teen Center may be a good place to develop mentorship opportunities, such as older teens in non-interventional conversation with middle schoolers. Pilot?
  - SEF and YWN have shifted to high schoolers and older teens. They have created a mentorship pilot initiative addressing the transition from secondary school to careers with ARPA funds.
    - Addresses “*truly* out of school time” as in post-graduation transition
    - Teen Empowerment is also discussing a similar model with SPS College & Career Readiness Specialists Melanie Kessler and Tracey Small for pathways to work initiatives models.
- **Future of Cabinet:**
  - Individual departments are running their proposals separately through SPS and the City instead of leveraging collaboratively through Cabinet. More Cabinet engagement such as working groups would help build this mixed delivery system.
  - How can we give best practice guidelines for OST programs for middle schoolers based on the factors outlined above? Can we create a “Middle Grades OST Cheat Sheet”?
    - Team coaching and PD
    - Increasing special needs capacity
    - Addressing transportation and cost barriers
  - Request for a strategic planner to advise on best practices with stakeholder input.

### Updates:

- SEF: SEF is creating a small ecosystem of providers with tuition assistance to families and enhancing direct services to be accessible to target populations – SomerPromise will follow up.
- Superintendent search is underway – the lead candidate withdrew from the process and two other candidates are at a voting impasse in the School Committee.

- Space in Capital Projects and Economic Development and working on needs assessment for space by collecting info from community partner surveys and later stakeholder interviews. This is being led by the Office of Food Access and Healthy Communities.
- The Cambridge Health Alliance WIC office has moved to Central St from Broadway/Winter Hill.
- Somerpromise received \$75k in order to create a cross-school field trip for middle school GSAs and increase LGBT support at the Art Haus Powderhouse Teen Center.
- SomerPromise is searching for special education supports for OST staff partners. Centers are highly motivated to participate in the PD support based on the CPPI experience.