

School Board Meeting:

August 25, 2008

Subject:

2008 Summer School Report

Presenter:

**Michelle Robinson, Kim
Carlson**

SUGGESTED SCHOOL BOARD ACTION:

Report only – no action required

DESCRIPTION:

The 2008 Summer School program followed the same format as past years with a few modifications. The main K-8 classes were held at BMCS, and Driver's Ed, ninth grade transition classes, and the make-up credit classes were housed at the high school. Budget cuts to the summer school program necessitated the high school make-up credit classes be run through Phoenix Learning Center.

The other significant changes for this year involved the referral process for the remedial math and reading classes and the kindergarten Kaleidoscope curriculum. The Math Success and Reading Success teachers reported that they greatly appreciated the revamped referral process this year that only allowed students to register for these classes if they had been referred in the spring by their classroom teacher. This allowed for better placement of students in the correct skill level, and instruction more aligned with students' specific needs. While this resulted in fewer students registered for these classes, the students enrolled had a true need for remedial instruction and weren't enrolled merely because it was a no-fee class. To counter this, we offered an increased number of fee-based enrichment math and reading classes.

At the request of several district kindergarten teachers and administrators, the kindergarten Kaleidoscope curriculum was totally redone this year to better align with the class' purpose – providing a fun and enriching yet structured opportunity for kindergartners to work further on skills in preparation for first grade. Kindergarten teachers referred students for this program, but unlike Reading Success and Math Success, it was open to any kindergarten students. Several district kindergarten teachers wrote the new curriculum this spring and incorporated several current district curricular initiatives: Responsive Classroom, Literacy by Design, Chicago Math, and Lucy Calkin's writing. Teacher and parent survey feedback was positive and parents stated their children enjoyed the experience and they appreciated the focus on skill-building to counter possible summer regression before first grade.

Budget cuts further necessitated slight fee increases in the enrichment classes and Kaleidoscope. The remedial classes and the fifth grade transition class, You in the

Middle, remained no-fee classes. Likewise, the family transportation fee was increased from \$35 to \$37 and most parents surveyed understood this need, especially with increased fuel prices.

Despite the fee increases and the implementation of the teacher-referral-only process for the grades 1-6 remedial math and reading classes, general summer school enrollment *in the K-8 program* held pretty steady from last year. Lower numbers in the fifth grade to sixth grade transition class, You in the Middle, are most likely indicative of the smaller fifth grade class size district wide this past year. Enrollment numbers were as follows:

	2007	2008
K-8 Total	1,038	1,031
Reading	322	211
Math	303	176
Kaleidoscope	106	111
You in Middle	251	236
BHS make-up credit	29	33
Drivers' Education	244	225
Gr. 6-8 Arts Magnet class	N/A	12

Students in grades 7-9 were again invited to apply as a Teen Team volunteer. This year, applicants were asked to obtain a teacher referral to include with their application as a means to ensure that the students selected would be dependable and willing to work within the various assignments of the summer school program. The Teen Team was under the supervision of Teresa Spike, BCMS para, this year, and had 59 students participating. Summer school teachers repeatedly commented on the high quality of the volunteers this year and their willingness to assist where needed. Participants were again invited to participate in a Valley Trip with Community Ed subsidizing part of the ticket cost. Fifty-one Teen Team students took advantage of this opportunity.

Both summer school teaching staff and parents were again asked to complete surveys regarding the program. Very few teacher surveys were returned, but completed surveys and informal comments during the sessions indicated teacher satisfaction with the program was high, and feedback was overall very positive.

Parents were sent paper surveys, and also an electronic version if they had provided an email address. Twelve email surveys were returned, and 135 paper surveys. Feedback was generally very positive and a number of comments stated hopes that the program would not be cut or eliminated in the future. The fee increases didn't appear to have detrimental effects either in enrollment or in parent comments, yet some did state that the fees are prohibitive with multiple children enrolled. On another note, parents did express

some displeasure with the bus loading/unloading zone as it makes it difficult for them to drop off and pick up their children conveniently.

Feedback was also sought regarding a possible move to online registration for summer school. There are a number of details to work out before this can happen, but parents responding to the survey seemed interested. A cost-cutting change made this year was combining the summer school catalog with the Community Ed Summer Brochure into one publication. No issues or concerns were voiced, and in an effort to reduce expenditures, this printing option will continue for next year as well.

An excerpt of parent survey results:

In general, how would you rate our Summer School Program?

<i>Great-74</i>	<i>Good-65</i>	<i>Fair-6</i>	<i>Poor-2</i>
<i>50.5%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>

Community Education is considering offering online registration for summer school next year. If online registration is available, would that be your preferred method of registering?

<i>Yes -104</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>No-32</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>No response -11</i>	<i>7%</i>
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Do you feel that the variety of classes offered meets the needs and interests of your child(ren)?

<i>Yes-130</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>No-7</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>No response-10</i>	<i>7%</i>
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Please tell us how you feel about the fees charged for Summer School?

<i>Kindergarten Kaleidoscope - \$78</i>	<i>OK- 54</i>	<i>Too High -15</i>	<i>It's a Bargain-14</i>	<i>No response-64</i>
	<i>36%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>44%</i>

<i>Enrichment Classes - \$48/\$49</i>	<i>OK-93</i>	<i>Too High -22</i>	<i>It's a Bargain-14</i>	<i>No response-18</i>
	<i>63%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>12%</i>

<i>Supply Fees - \$10-\$20</i>	<i>OK- 85</i>	<i>Too High -14</i>	<i>It's a Bargain-14</i>	<i>No response-34</i>
	<i>57%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>23%</i>

New this year to the summer school class offerings was a class called Summer Arts Academy for students in grades 6-8. This two week full-day class was offered through the BHS Arts Magnet Program in collaboration with Community Education. Each day was devoted to a different art form, and students had the opportunity to work in a hands-on environment with various professional artists both at BHS and through numerous field trips. The fee for this class was \$100, and twelve students participated.

The District 877 Summer School program has a long history of quality programming and strong participation by district families. Unfortunately, pending budget cuts in the face of a failed levy vote this fall will necessitate the elimination of this program as we know it. In a worst case scenario, it is our hope that some type of summer programming can still

be offered to district students, whether in the form of Community Ed Summer Camps or some other creative format. Likewise, we are exploring additional avenues for increasing revenues to the program in ways other than merely increasing fees.

In closing, we owe gratitude to many people for helping to offer such a quality program year after year: the Community Ed staff who work tirelessly planning, registering and facilitating the program; the many teachers from both within and outside the district who commit time during their summer to work with students; the BCMS administration and office staff who share their summer space with us; district custodians and particularly the BCMS custodial staff who make smooth work of setting up a “school within a school” each year; American Student Transport for going above and beyond in helping us transport and keep the students safe in the bus loading and unloading zones; and the District 877 administration and school board, who value and support this summer school experience for students. Thank you all for another successful year!