

The Public Schools of Southborough Before- and After-School Care Program Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Public Schools of Southborough recommending to the SSC that they directly provide the before-and-after-school care services to the community?

For the past several decades, The Public Schools of Southborough has provided through a lease contract the school facilities for an outside organization to use to provide these before- and after-school care services (BaASC). For several years, the District has had internal discussions regarding offering a BaASC program operated by the District versus leasing the space out to be used to provide those services. This fall, the District began a feasibility study to evaluate operating a BaASC program. The purpose of the Feasibility Study was to determine whether the advantages of bringing the District BaASC program within its operations was more advantageous for families, students, and the District than to continue the current approach.. To that end, the District researched school districts that themselves operated before-and after-school care programs, and explored staffing, programmatic, financial, and overall implications.

Did the District solicit feedback from the parent community on what are the priorities when designing a high quality before- and after-school program?

In July 2021 and November 2021, the school district solicited feedback from the Southborough parent community about their priorities for extended day programming. In both the July and November surveys, the outcomes were consistent. The parent community identified reliability, consistency, enjoyable and fun, affordability, and hours of operations as the top five ranked priorities. Overall, the respondents communicated that they were very satisfied with the current BaASC provider, Southborough Extended Day Program.

Link to survey Results: [The Public Schools of Southborough: Extended Day](#)

What did the District do to investigate its ability to operate an extended day program?

The District investigated many facets of operating an extended day program including Licensing and Insurance Requirements, Programmatic Design, Locations and Schedule of Operation, Access to Resources and Expertise, Personnel, Professional Development & Training, Parent Advisory Councils, and Finances. A comprehensive BaASC handbook will be created to provide programmatic details and will be provided to all participating families.

Does a District operated program require any special licenses and/or insurance?

The District reached out to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to inquire if special licenses or other requirements were required to operate a before- and after-school program. We learned that we do not need to hold a license to operate a BaASC program as it is deemed an extension of the school day. Moreover, the District's ability to operate this program does not require additional licenses, certifications, or insurance coverage.

Did the District review with legal counsel the additional financial risk they would expose the taxpayers to by taking on the legal liability inherent in providing this program itself. If so, what advice did it receive?

Yes, the District asked legal counsel about the additional risk. In fact, the advice came back that the District was actually exposing the taxpayers to unknown, possibly more risk today, by not having the program under its control, as any liability for events that might occur in the current situation would be claimed to be the responsibility of the District, anyway, based on the events occurring in/on School facilities, and the District has been very fortunate that it had avoided such problems up until now.

What will the design of the program be?

The Public Schools of Southborough's Before- and After-School Care's (BaASC) mission will center on providing opportunities to support students' social, emotional, and academic development. The Program will provide safe and nurturing environments where students can engage in enrichment activities, participate in recreational programming and socialize with their peers. Each day, time will be allocated for students to work on their homework. The staff members will create engaging and innovative programming for students of all ages, interests, and abilities. The Program will build positive relationships, develop social skills, strengthen self-esteem, and encourage independence, responsibility, and good decision-making.

What will be the locations and schedule for the program?

BaASC programming will continue at Neary, Woodward, and Finn Schools and operate with the same daily schedule as the current provider operates. The Program will offer flexibility to families with unique schedules. The registration process will give families a menu of options to choose from and will be adaptable as the school year unfolds. Furthermore, the Program will offer programming during school vacations (including most state and federal holidays), professional development days, most early release days, and summer months to accommodate the needs of families. The summer months provide the District with a unique opportunity for the programs to enrich the students. The District will explore enrichment opportunities through our staff and other partners.

Will the District use its resources and expertise to support the program?

One of the greatest benefits of bringing the Program under the District's operations is that it will extend the District's resources and expertise. This will include access to a variety of resources and District faculty and staff with expertise in many areas. The staff of the BaASC will be able to communicate with school personnel on all matters related to students enrolled in the Program, and the collaboration between staff members will be a genuine extension of the school day.

How will the District support all students?

The BaASC will comply with the nondiscrimination mandates of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will provide reasonable accommodations and/or policy modifications to enable qualified students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate. Parents/guardians will be notified in the Extended Day Parent Handbook of the process to initiate a request for a reasonable accommodation/policy modification. Requests for reasonable accommodations and/or policy modifications will be evaluated on an individual basis. In

accordance with Section 504 and the ADA, the BaASC will not be required to provide accommodations/modifications that would result in a significant financial or administrative burden or would require a fundamental alteration of the program. Any complaints of disability discrimination within the Extended Day Program may be addressed through The Public Schools of Southborough's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure.

Who will hire the Director?

The District's Executive Director of Human Resources will immediately launch a search for a BaASC Director. The hiring process will include a search committee that will screen and interview candidates. Parents representatives will be a part of the search committee. The committee will ultimately recommend a finalist(s) to the Superintendent. The hiring of a Director is the first critical first step in starting the new Program.

Once hired, the Director will lead searches for site coordinators at each school and the part-time financial specialist. The site coordinator will be the primary point of contact for school administration. They will support the Program planning, implement the established curriculum, and ensure that all procedures are followed to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

The number of direct staff hired will be based on student enrollment in the Program. The District will utilize its existing workforce to advertise open positions. Employing current District staff will help to ensure continuity of routines and relationships, and the District intends to make positions available to qualified members of the staff of the current provider, if they are interested, in order to provide further continuity during and after the transition.

What are the key positions for the program?

- Director of BaASC
- Part-Time Financial Specialist
- Three Site Coordinators

Will the staff have access to professional development & training?

The District's professional development system will be a crucial asset to the BaASC Program. The District's comprehensive professional development will include the BaASC staff. BaASC staff will be provided flexible professional development opportunities that allow for independent learning and professional growth.

What will be the function of the BaASC Advisory Council?

The Public Schools of Southborough will create a BaASC Advisory Council to help assist with the implementation, provide input, and ongoing feedback on how the Program can support students and families. The PAC will serve in an advisory role. The PAC will meet a minimum of quarterly with an agenda facilitated by the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and BaASC Director. In addition to the Parent Advisory Council, individual parents will always have the option to communicate directly with site coordinators and the Director on all matters related to their child and the program.

Is it true that the taxpayers subsidized the current provider for the 2020-2021 school year?

Yes. At a public Southborough School Meeting, the current provider made a request to the School Committee that all of its contractual obligated rent payments totaling approximately \$80,000 for the 2020-2021 year be forgiven. The School Committee granted their request.

What was the outcome of the financial analysis regarding operating a BaASC?

The Finance Team solicited information from districts currently operating BaASC and utilized existing budgeting tools to create an estimated budget. Based on these preliminary numbers, the Finance Team projects that the BaASC can self-sustain its operations. The estimates of projected profit ranged from \$91,714 to \$250,000. The Finance team used conservative numbers in the scenario below.

ESTIMATED INCOME		PROJECTIONS	
Tuition			\$621,020.00
Summer Program			\$67,500.00
ESTIMATED EXPENSES		PROJECTIONS	
Salaries			\$494,776.00
Health Insurance			\$57,230.00
Other Expenses			\$44,800.00
PROJECTED PROFIT/(LOSS)		\$91,714.00	

Based on these projections, the Finance team proposes the following rates for the 2022-2023 school year:

Before School Program	Monthly Rates
1 Day	\$46.00
2 Day	\$82.00
3 Day	\$115.00
4 Day	\$144.00
5 Day	\$175.00

After School Program	Monthly Rates
1 Day	\$128.00
2 Day	\$201.00
3 Day	\$288.00
4 Day	\$364.00
5 Day	\$427.00

Will the District provide financial support to families?

In order to support all families, the District will apply to the Office of Financial Assistance for Early Education and Care to accept child care voucher subsidies. The District will also provide free or reduced tuition to families who have a demonstrated financial need.

What will the profit from the program be used for?

The District will use the profit from the program to reinvest in the program with materials, supplies, equipment, and upgrades to the spaces being used by the BaASC Program. The District will create and maintain a 3-month reserve of program expenses in case of unforeseen expenses or closures.

Income from the BaASC Program will be managed in a School Extended Services revolving account as outlined in M.G.L. Chapter 71 Section 26C. Revolving account funds can only be expended to support the activity, program, or service that generated the profit. This fund will also support program expenses that include employee salaries, benefits, supplies, and materials.

What did the District learn during its Feasibility Study?

The District completed a full report for the School Committee. The link to the report is below:

[Feasibility Report - Before and After School Care - December 2021](#)

What was the District's recommendation to the Southborough School Committee?

The Public Schools of Southborough recommends it operates a comprehensive BaASC program. If the Southborough School Committee supports the District's recommendation, the District will work closely with the Southborough Extended Day Program and other stakeholders to ensure a seamless transition. The District will begin the transition in the winter of 2022, in preparation for the District's BaASC program to be operational for the start of the 2022-2023 academic year.

Prior to the Feasibility Study, what steps did the District take to secure before- and after-school programming?

In August 2021, the District's licensing agreement with Southborough Extended Day Program (SEDP) expired. Prior to the expiration of a vendor contract, the District must determine and prepare the proper procurement method to solicit vendor bids or proposals. The District determined that selecting the most advantageous proposal for the Program requires comparative judgments of factors in addition to price, including: experience and program content/quality and the effectiveness/quality of program administration and support. Based on that determination, the District issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) under M.G.L. Chapter 30B for the procurement of a BaASC program in April 2021. The District determined it had referenced the wrong section of Chapter 30B in the preparation of the RFP document and rejected all bids.

The District issued a new RFP in July 2021 with enhanced criteria to rate each proposal received. At the conclusion of the second round, the District decided to reject all proposals and issue a one-year licensing agreement to SEDP in order to secure services for the community for the 2021-2022 school year. Simultaneously, the District launched a Feasibility Study to determine whether the programming and operation of a before and after school program could be successful under the school district's responsibility.

If the first RFP had not referenced the incorrect section of Chapter 30B, would the current provider have been awarded the bid? If not, why not?

No. The current provider would not have been awarded the bid. That bid did not meet minimum requirements of the RFP and is available to review upon request.

What if the Southborough School Committee votes not to support the district's plan to operate a comprehensive BaASC program?

If the Southborough School Committee votes not to support the district's plan to operate a comprehensive BaASC program, the District would be required to expedite another Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The RFP process is required by Massachusetts General Law and allows the District to weigh the relative merits of proposals submitted by competing vendors. A non-price proposal is received separately from price proposals, and evaluated based on the outlined criteria. The contract is awarded to the vendor submitting the most advantageous proposal, taking into consideration the proposals' relative merits and price. The District is prepared to issue an RFP if the Southborough School Committee votes not to support the district's plan to operate a BaASC program. Starting this process in January 2022 will ensure that programming is secure for our students and families for the 2022-2023 school year.

Why didn't the District issue SEDP a licensing/rental agreement rather than following an RFP process?

After consulting with the Massachusetts Inspector General's Office, issuing a licensing/rental agreement would usurp the Massachusetts Procurement Act, and place the District at risk for a lawsuit from other potential vendors. In prior years, the District issued Request for Proposals (RFPs) for extended day services and as a result, other vendors would have a case that the District was issuing a license/rental agreement to avoid following Massachusetts Procurement Law.