



TO: Robert Barr, Deputy City Manager
FROM: George Schaaf, Parks & Recreation Director
DATE: April 21, 2023
RE: Community Schools Programming & Management

This memo assesses the operational and fiscal impacts that would result if Parks & Recreation assumed responsibility for the Community Schools program currently managed by the Juneau School District (JSD). This assessment includes limited information that is publicly available regarding expenditures, revenues, staffing, and programs. At this time, we are unable to provide a reliable picture without additional information that has been requested from JSD.

Statutes & Policy

State law provides that “The governing body of a school district may allow the use of school facilities for any legal gatherings or assemblies. The governing body shall adopt bylaws that will ensure reasonable and impartial use of the facilities” (AS 14.03.100).

The Community Schools program is established by the Board of Education pursuant to Board Policy No. 0430 (adopted July 1, 2017):

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Board of Education shall collaborate with the City and Borough of Juneau to maintain a program of community education, which uses school facilities to serve the recreational, vocational and cultural interests of the community.

The Community Education Program shall use district staff as appropriate, invite the participation of representatives of the community in regular advisory meetings, cooperate with local organizations and agencies in providing services and activities, and periodically assess the needs and resources of the community to develop a comprehensive program of community education. The Community Schools Supervisor and other district administrators shall participate in long-range planning and district goal setting so that the Community Education Program can support and enrich district and school goals. The program shall be presented to the Board for information and suggestions on a periodic basis.

The Superintendent is directed to seek out and utilize such sources of revenue as may be appropriate for the financial support of the Community Education Program. The Superintendent shall prepare regulations for the use of school facilities; such regulations shall be distributed to every user of the facilities and every applicant for such use.

Board Policy No. 3513 addresses the use of school facilities for community use:

The Board of Education recognizes that education is a lifelong process and that school facilities should be made available for community use. Enabling citizens to be involved in the educational process of the community will also help increase effective communications between the school and community. The Board also recognizes that both increased communication and citizen involvement provide a valuable source of input concerning the prioritized needs, programs and resources of our community.

The Board supports the process of citizen involvement known as Community Education and encourages its development and growth throughout the District.

The Superintendent shall prepare regulations for the use of school facilities; such regulations shall be distributed to every user of the facilities and every applicant for such use.

The Board of Education has also adopted Administrative Regulation No. 3513, which provides that “The Community Schools Program shall make buildings and facilities available to community groups when such use does not conflict with the educational program of the school.” Aside from use of school facilities, the Board of Education has not adopted any regulations specifically pertaining to community education programs provided through Community Schools.

According to the Juneau School District's FY2017 budget document:

Community Schools is both a program and process, which recognizes that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life. It offers access to a variety of academic, recreational, social, cultural, and health promotional activities, programs and events within our school facilities. Community Schools stresses cooperation and coordination between schools, agencies, business, community, and individuals. The Juneau Community Schools Program is active in all school facilities. The Community Schools office serves as a hub for all programs and community activities happening in the schools. Community Schools provides access to facilities, building supervision, summer youth resources, community scheduling, young adult and adult programs, and educational opportunities for grades K-12.

Current Situation

Based on the information available, the Community Schools program currently provides two services: (1) scheduling school facilities for community use and (2) offering enrichment and recreation programming to the community. In addition to two administrative staff who schedule facilities, Community Schools employs a number of building monitors who are responsible for facilities while they are being used by community groups. Enrichment classes and recreation programs are often led by contractors or community members. A total of 3.5 FTE staff are listed in the FY2017 JSD budget.

The Parks & Recreation Department is the largest single user of JSD facilities through Community Schools. Because Parks & Recreation has no suitable gym space of its own, we rely on JSD facilities to deliver programs like adult volleyball and youth basketball. While the Board of Education adopted a policy that waived rental fees for Parks & Recreation's use of school facilities, the department paid JSD \$65,000 to \$100,000 annually for scheduling services until 2020. These payments were in addition to outside-the-cap funding appropriated by the Assembly to JSD for Community Schools.

Discussion

Parks & Recreation offers very limited recreation programs due to limited resources and the fact that Community Schools has largely owned this space. Since the pandemic, however, Community Schools has reduced their offerings significantly. These types of recreation and enrichment programs have good alignment with the Parks & Recreation Department and its mission. With some additional resources, Parks & Recreation could dramatically increase the programs and services being offered to the community. This could include things like expanded youth and adult sports programs, pickleball leagues and tournaments, fitness programs, arts and crafts, activities for seniors, and expanded summer camps. Of the existing 3.5 FTE allocated to Community Schools, Parks & Recreation would need to retain at least one full-time position (1.0 FTE) to develop and coordinate community recreation programs, in addition to some level of part-time staff.

Scheduling JSD facilities would be challenging due to conflicting demands for limited space. This could be addressed by a robust facility access and prioritization policy. Parks & Recreation already schedules JSD's use of outdoor athletic facilities managed by the Department, including 15 ballfields. The increased workload of scheduling JSD facilities could be absorbed by existing Parks & Recreation staff if the Youth Activities Grant program is moved from Areawide Recreation to the Youth Services Division. Combined with existing workloads and grant-reporting associated with the Shéiyi Xaat Hít Youth Shelter, the Department would need to hire an additional full-time Administrative Assistant (1.0FTE).

A more complete analysis is impossible without detailed information from JSD regarding earned revenue, General Fund support, expenditures, staffing levels, and position descriptions. We have requested that information from JSD and will provide an update once we receive it.