

[Great Neck Public Schools Looking at Child Care](#)

Written by Wendy Karpel Kreitzman Friday, 19 February 2010 00:00

Program for Before and After Elementary School

An elementary school before-school and/or an after-school child care program for the Great Neck Public Schools was proposed at the Feb. 8 Board of Education public action meeting. The program, which would be run by SCOPE, would be run at no cost to the school district; parents who choose to enroll their children will pay.

The E.M. Baker Elementary School, covered with snow following the Feb. 10 blizzard, would be one site for before and after-school child care.

Kelly Newman, executive director of elementary education, and Dave Zawatson, director of physical education, recreation and athletics, presented the proposal, first explaining that the process began in September 2008 when the United Parent Teacher Council made a request for an exploratory committee. Four child care providers were researched — SCOPE, Great Neck's CLASP, the Samuel Field Y and the Y in Glen Cove. SCOPE was chosen and in April 2009 the committee made a presentation to the Board of Education. The board then authorized an "interest survey" of parents with elementary aged children.



Ms. Newman explained that SCOPE was chosen because it was already offered more widely on Long Island and SCOPE promised that they would start the program even if only a few children were enrolled at first.

The initial survey was then prepared and conducted in late spring of 2009, using ParentLink. The results were "strongly in favor" of an after-school elementary childcare program. However, the total number of responses was not considered sufficient and a follow-up survey was conducted by conventional mail in the fall of 2009.

The follow-up survey was mailed during the second week of November 2009, and 243 responses were received, double the number of responses to the first survey. Favorable interest was expressed by 202 parents. The survey showed that most parents favored a

five-day-a-week program. However, some parents did prefer an option for fewer than five days a week.

An elementary school building breakout was also included. Based on the survey, the number of children likely to be registered during the 2010-2011 school year is 283. The building by building breakout is as follows: E.M. Baker, 45; JFK, 33; Lakeville, 87; Parkville, 64; Saddle Rock, 54. Each elementary site has enough interest to support its own program.

SCOPE would configure the program with a.m., p.m., or a.m. and p.m. options available. The a.m. program would begin two hours before the start of school and the p.m. program would have dismissal until 6:30 p.m. (a time that received strong interest from parents). The options would be for as few as 10 days a month attendance and up to five days per week. There would be options for half days and holiday for an additional fee.

The SCOPE program description for the p.m. program is as follows: attendance, snack (15 minutes), study time (45 minutes to one hour), active play (45 minutes to one hour), special activity (45 minutes to one hour), and snack (15 minutes.) The a.m. program would include activities listed for the p.m. program, and children could bring breakfast from home if they choose.

The SCOPE fee structure was also presented. The a.m. minimum monthly payment would be \$125 if a child attends 10 or fewer scheduled days per month; children could attend additional days at a rate of \$12.50 per day. The a.m. full time monthly payment would be \$214 for a child who attends every day. The p.m. minimum monthly payment would be \$156 for a child who attended 10 or fewer scheduled days per month; children could attend additional days at a rate of \$15.60 per day. A p.m. full-time monthly payment would be \$272 for a child attending every day. The a.m./p.m. full time monthly rate would be \$471 for a child who attends a.m. and p.m. every day. There would also be a 20 percent sibling discount. Subsidies would be available for income eligible families through DSS.

Ms. Newman and Mr. Zawatson said that the entire process to set up the SCOPE before-and-after-school program is about four to six months. If approved, the next step would be for the school district to negotiate and enter in to a contract with the provider, SCOPE. The provider would then have to seek New York State licensing for the program. SCOPE has already indicated that they would also meet with the community to publicize the program and to seek program input. Next would come program staffing. Registration would be in the late spring. The program would begin in September of 2010.

Questions and Concerns

Following the presentation, board members and several members of the public asked questions and offered concerns. The program would have a year-to-year contract with the school district and families would have monthly contracts. There would also be the possibility of a summer program as early as this year. Children attending the program

would be clustered according to age groups. The entire program, including the childcare providers, would all be state-licensed.

A representative from CLASP, the longtime off-site childcare program in Great Neck, reported that CLASP would be ending its school-age childcare program and would concentrate on babies only.

Some parents expressed great concern that upcoming budget cuts would eliminate before and after-school sports and enrichment programs and their hope was that this new program could possibly fill the gap. Board of Education President Barbara Berkowitz emphasized that these are two separate programs. The before and after school programs are one entity, and the school district's extra-curricular activities are another, separate program. The childcare program, Ms. Berkowitz said, is being done due to the need for childcare. She noted that any programs that will have to be cut due to budget constraints could be added back when the budget allows.

The board of education will now look into all of the details necessary to sign a contract for before-school and after-school child care.

Possible approval for the program could come at the March 8 board meeting.