



*A Community of Learners*

## **Information and Action Item: Adventures Summer 2020 Program and Fee Approval**

TO: School Board  
Trisha Kocanda, Superintendent

FROM: Linda Stone, Site Director  
Brad Goldstein, CFO

February 25, 2020

### **Overview & Background**

The District has hosted a successful summer program, Adventures in Learning, for over seventy-five years. In 2018, Linda Stone, a special education teacher at The Skokie School, took over the role as Director. This past summer our general program returned to Carleton Washburne from Skokie, where it was placed in 2018 due to construction during the summer. Our primary program was housed at Hubbard Woods this past summer and was led by Jay Dillon, and he will continue in this role this summer as well.

Adventures in Learning has a long-standing tradition of providing engaging experiences designed by certified teachers and staff. Students may find themselves designing and making their own clothing in our Clothing Decoration Class, learning how to become more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and body so that instead of being overwhelmed by them, students are better able to manage them in our Mindfulness Class, learning skills to testing their survival skills and fire-building abilities in Wilderness Survival class; bonding with, and later adopting, a live animal in Animal Care. These are just a few of the experiences that make Adventures special. This year we are also excited to continue offering such classes as Spa-licious, Coding for Kids, Creative Clay and Sculpting, and Fishing! We are proud to offer all of these classes as part of our commitment to enrich the lives of our community of learners.

The Adventures program served roughly 624 students last summer with 92 students enrolled in the primary program (grades pre-k to 1), 494 students in the general program (grades 2 to 8), and 38 students enrolled as part of special education Extended School Year program. There were approximately 120 class offerings.

The program has traditionally been structured as a break-even program, though typically runs a slight surplus. The 2019 program resulted in a monetary deficit of approximately \$26,800. There were several factors that caused this.

- There was a change in registration software that caused a delay in launching the registration system. We had to hire additional staff in certain classes to accommodate registrants and ensure students were getting their first choice of classes due to this glitch. We also had a few structural issues due to the limitations of the new software.
- With the delay in launching the website, we did not want to deny students their first choice in classes. This resulted in some large classes that required additional staffing which created a large loss in one of these classes in particular.
- We increased the number of 1:1 assistants due to many ESY students taking additional classes. The FTE count for these students rose from 10 to 16 in this area. We will have the Director work with the Director of Student Services to ensure appropriate staffing is in place for this coming summer.
- We changed the way that we charged off some of our staffing costs to Adventures in Learning. This created additional costs this year that will need to be absorbed in coming years for those working the program
- We had numerous classes that had low student counts. We intend to create a cutoff date of May 1st to ensure classes meet the required minimums to run a program to ensure that this doesn't happen in the future.

In planning for and structuring the 2020 summer program, the estimated participation of 625 students is being utilized. We attempt to keep the program current and fresh, as a result we will again add at least 4 new offerings this summer. We will also look to apply a minimum student count to run a class to assist in avoiding future deficits. We would set a minimum threshold of 8 per class for all classes other than those that require more individualized attention such as guitar. We would have a cutoff of May 1st to fill the classes, and those students that are registered in classes that won't be running will then be offered a choice to move to another class.

Administration is also recommending an increase in registration fees to residents of \$35. It is recommended that non-resident fees increase \$135. This larger than normal

increase is necessary to ensure a breakeven program and mirrors the variance that the Park District charges for non-residents. This is after no increase to the fee for the 2019 program. The fees for 2020 resident fee would increase to \$610 and a non-resident fee of \$710. We believe these fees will allow us to operate the program on a cost neutral basis. In addition, the Administration is recommending a supply fee for candle-making of \$20 per participant. This is a class where the supplies are much greater than any other class.

Most classes have supply costs of less than \$100, and this class has supply costs of approximately \$2,400.

Administration believes that the 2020 Adventures program will continue to offer exciting and meaningful student experiences. The program will run from June 15th, 2020 through July 17th, 2020. The plan is for program offerings to be posted on our district website during the second week in February with open registration to begin in March for the 2020 Adventures summer school program. Families will be able to continue to register for Adventures online, which provides convenience for parents and efficiency for scheduling classes. The online registration has been improved to ensure the server can support the high demand at peak times. Again, this year, we are also offering a one-week pre-registration access to Winnetka residents only starting March 4th, 2020. We have implemented a streamlined registration process through RevTrak, that allows for one login for all parents for all of our payment processing. Scholarships are also available to families with financial need.

## **Recommendation**

The recommendation is that the Board approves the continuation of the Adventures program during the summer of 2020 with updated offerings at a fee of \$610 for residents and \$710 for non-residents, as well as a supply fee of \$20 for candle-making.