

ED COMMITTEE #3
December 3, 2007
Briefing

MEMORANDUM

November 29, 2007

TO: Education Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst *uj*

SUBJECT: **Briefing – Community Use of Public Facilities – Use of school space for youth outreach activities**

Today the Education Committee will hear a briefing on community use of public facilities. Ginny Gong, Executive Director, Office of Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF), and Elizabeth Habermann, Financial Administrator, CUPF, will be present to brief the Committee.

As the need for out-of-school programming for children and youth has become a focus of the County Executive and the Council, the availability of accessible and appropriate space to deliver quality programming has also become a concern. The following overarching questions that have been raised by the Education Committee and the Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB) will be explored further today:

- What is the demand for school space?
- How can more space for out-of-school time programming be made available where it is needed?

The work of the Committee on this topic is inter-related to other ongoing efforts to expand out-of-school time programming for children and youth in Montgomery County. The Executive Branch has been working on a Positive Youth Development initiative that includes the development of three community-based collaboratives to support youth activities in Long Branch, Aspen Hill and Germantown. Participating in this initiative, the Collaboration Council has been mapping programs, facilities and resources in the three neighborhoods, as part of its effort to develop a system of out-of-school services in the County.

I. REQUESTED INFORMATION

The Committee has requested information related the demand for school space and efforts to expand access to available space. The response to these requests are presented below as follows:

- CUPF Reports -- on usage and capacity of school space.
- Provider Survey Results -- on program challenges and success in accessing public space.
- Expansion Efforts -- on the roll out of centralized scheduling of high schools and collaboration with other public agencies.

CUPF REPORTS

At the FY08 budget discussion on CUPF, Committee members requested information assessing the demand for school space including: (1) the number of hours booked at schools (paid, free and administrative/school use), (2) the total capacity of public facilities, and (3) a comparison of fees charged by local jurisdictions.

CUPF responded to these requests in April 2007 by providing Committee members with a written overview (@1-6) that describes the total number of rooms booked and hours recorded, the most sought after spaces, and factors related to space usage, e.g., priority of use, activity type, compatibility, accessibility, and affordability. Some key points highlighted in the overview include:

- Approximately 40% of potentially available rooms in 199 schools were booked in FY06.
- CUPF recorded a total of 725,000 paid, free and administratively booked hours.
- Most all-purpose rooms and gymnasiums are booked at the end of the school day.
- The potential exists for expansion of classroom use in nearly every school.
- The number of standard classrooms available immediately after the end of the school day is limited by restrictions imposed by labor agreements.
- MCPS, PTA and child care providers have priority over other user groups.

CUPF also provided an inventory of MCPS school space available for use, a listing hours booked by school, and a comparison of rates for the use of area schools. These materials were made available to Committee members. They are on file with the Office of Legislative Information Services, 240-777-7910, for members of the public interested in reviewing them.

PROVIDER SURVEY RESULTS

The Collaboration Council conducted a supplemental survey of providers of afterschool activities to seek information about their programs and experiences running them. One part of the survey asked providers about the challenges in providing quality after school programs.

Securing appropriate and adequate locations to offer activities was ranked overall as the number 3 challenge facing respondents. The number one challenge was securing stable and adequate funding, and the number two challenge was recruiting, training and compensating qualified staff.

In addition to information provided by CUPF and the Collaboration Council, Councilmembers have asked for information describing the extent to which providers of out-of-school time programs are able access to their choice of school space or are accessing public space at all. Because this information was not readily available from other sources, Council staff developed a focused survey (@7-10) about provider experiences using public space for out-of-school time activities from September 2006 to August 2007. The survey was disseminated widely through Executive Branch agencies, the Collaboration Council, Nonprofit Montgomery!, and Impact Silver Spring, and 73 youth-serving organizations responded to it.

The survey results indicated that the majority of requests to book school space through CUPF are being filled (84-85%), although about 18% of requests do not receive their 1st or 2nd choice of facility. Survey results also supported CUPF conclusions that the type of spaces in greatest demand are multipurpose rooms and gymnasiums, and the geographic location in greatest demand is the Downcounty--Silver Spring/Langley Park area.

Other interesting findings include:

- Many survey respondents (22), serving children and youth of all ages, book space directly through schools instead of through CUPF.
- 9 respondents did not make any requests to book space through CUPF because they were previously unsuccessful and no longer tried.
- 6 respondents didn't know about CUPF
- MNCPPC, MCRD, and churches and synagogues were frequently cited as other providers of space for out-of-school time activities.
- 11 respondents indicated that space costs were either too high or a limiting factor in providing programming.

EXPANSION EFFORTS

At the FY08 budget discussion on CUPF, Committee members expressed concern about how long it would take to roll out central scheduling of all high schools, and interest in hearing a plan to expedite this process. In response to this discussion, a work group formed to explore how to move ahead with the central scheduling of high school space by CUPF. The group included high school principals, other MCPS personnel, a representative from the Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel, and representatives from the Council, the ICB and the Executive Branch. Council staff understands that recommendations from the workgroup will be released soon. CUPF representatives are expected to report on the progress of the workgroup at today's briefing.

In addition, it is expected that CUPF representatives will update the Committee on other efforts to coordinate and expand the availability of public facilities for out-of-school time programming. Such efforts include meeting with key nonprofits like the Collaboration Council

and the Arts and Humanities Council and collaborating with other providers of public space including the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) and the Department of Recreation (MCRD).

II. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

In exploring how to maximize the use of public space generally, the Committee may want to provide feedback on information presented today, including CUPF's efforts to coordinate and expand available space. Specific questions that that the Committee may want to ask include:

- Are there any lessons learned in the high school central scheduling roll out process that can be applied to further collaboration or coordination with other public agencies?
- Would it be worthwhile to explore opportunities to work with private providers of space like the faith community to increase availability and access?
- Are there other ways to conduct outreach to reach community-based organizations that may not know about opportunities to use public space through CUPF?

While it is useful to continue to work to expand to space for all community groups, Council staff notes that much activity is taking place related to the development of public policy priorities on after school programming. Consequently, it may be premature to address larger scope questions related to space expansion for out-of-school time activities --- whether afterschool programming should receive priority for space, whether specific organizations or services should receive priority, or whether public funds should support particular uses. As additional information becomes available on existing resources and needs in specific communities and the kinds of programs policymakers want to invest in, the Committee may then want to provide direction or comment on space-related policy to inform CUPF and ICB processes.

The packet contains the following attachments:

	<u>Circle #</u>
Community Use of Public Facilities Overview	1-6
Council Survey for Providers on Public Space Use	7-10

Community Use of Public Facilities

The Triple A's of Community Use: **A**vailability, **A**ccessibility, and **A**ffordability

Access to public space for additional after-school programming has emerged as a critical need. While it is usually possible to identify rooms open to community groups in a particular school, it may not always be the requester's first choice. Of the estimated 9,300 rooms potentially available in the 199 schools scheduled by CUPF during the last fiscal year, an estimated 3,700 rooms were used to accommodate the 725,000 hours of recorded paid, free and administratively booked hours. Although most all-purpose rooms and gymnasiums are booked at the end of the school day by after-school child care providers, the potential exists for expansion of classroom use in nearly every school. Additionally, not all rooms lend themselves to community use without special arrangements and approval because of specialty equipment (such as computers, media equipment, science laboratory equipment, and weights), or health and safety concerns (such as kitchens, industrial arts and home economic rooms) and are not included the count above. The number of standard classrooms available immediately after the end of the school day is further restricted by labor agreements which specify that teachers have use of their classroom for one hour. It is unknown how many teachers use this allotted hour, but anecdotal information indicates that classrooms could be made available.

In addition to inventory availability, many other factors are considerations related to space usage:

- Priority of use - MCPS, PTA and child care providers have priority over other user groups. Thirty-nine percent of use before 6:00 pm is for after-school child care, with an additional 34 percent use by MCPS and PTAs for extracurricular activities. Recreation use accounts for another 12 percent of use up to 6:00 p m
- Activity type - Use of rooms with special equipment such as auditoriums, kitchens, cafeterias, and computer labs require additional staff coverage, and in some cases require school staff permission. ICB policy also prohibits use of public space for personal parties, activities that are restrictive or discriminate by reason of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or color, or present a nuisance, hazard, or safety concern.
- Compatibility - CUPF works collaboratively with customers and schools to match users with available space that best meets their needs after consideration of applicable restrictions related to staffing, time limits, equipment needs, etc.
- Accessibility - CUPF strives to maximize use by the broadest number of groups possible in a fair and equitable way by establishing application windows, priorities and time limits.
- Affordability - A tiered approach to fees, taking type of the user group into account, helps create rates which are affordable to our users, 98 percent of whom are non-profit.

Additional information concerning scheduling follows. As programs and location needs are identified, CUPF will work with these organizations to facilitate the best possible matches.

Inventory

CUPF schedules schools, including some "closed" to regular student use, meeting rooms in the Council Office Building (COB), Executive Office Building (EOB), Regional Service Centers (RSC) and Public Libraries. School space represents the bulk of "inventory" scheduled (approximately 98 percent) by CUPF. During FY06, CUPF booked the following inventory:

- Public Libraries: one or more large and small conference rooms are available for community use in each library (18 libraries were used in FY06 for a total of 5,658 hours).
- Regional Service Centers: one or more large and small conference rooms are available for community use in each Center, with the exception of Silver Spring RSC which controls space use for that site. Of the four centers used in FY06, a total of 2,680 hours were booked by CUPF.
- EOB and COB: auditoriums, lobby level conference rooms, cafeterias and hearing rooms are available for community use. The combined use hours of the EOB and COB during FY06 was 5,470.
- Schools: 199 open and 33 closed facilities; 725,000 hours of paid, free and administratively booked hours were recorded in FY06.
 - Elementary Schools: 129 booked in FY06 (includes 95 Before/After-school child care sites primarily using the all-purpose rooms and classrooms in FY06).
 - Middle Schools: 38 booked in FY06 (includes 12 Before/After-school child care sites primarily using the gymnasiums and classrooms in FY06).
 - High Schools: 25 booked in FY06 (three of which were centrally booked by CUPF in FY06 and another centrally booked school was added in FY07). Decisions as to awarding space at non-centrally booked schools are made by the school staff and then sent to CUPF for data entry. Blair and Magruder host evening and weekend alternative high school programs for adults.
 - Closed/Special Alternative Schools: 7 booked in FY06 (includes 4 before/after-school activity sites).

Overall, inventory remains static, with only a few new schools opening each school year and others closing for renovation. While all high schools and most middle schools have gymnasiums, only 85 percent of elementary schools have them, although construction plans will increase this number slightly over the next few years.

Inventory is impacted by MCPS construction/maintenance schedules. During summer 2007, nearly 60 schools will be completely or partially closed due to construction. Detailed lists of inventory and usage are included in Attachment 1, Inventory of MCPS Schools Available for Community Use and Attachment 2, Hours of School Use Recorded by CUPF (Paid, Free, and Administrative) FY06.

Charts 1-2 in the appendix show overall use by the facility type.

Hours Available For Community Use

The scheduling and access needs of the primary occupants of a school or government building are accommodated prior to community use. As needed, the primary occupant can "bump" a community user with notice or due to an emergency. In such cases every effort is made to find an alternate placement. Access to schools and government buildings is scheduled accordingly:

- Public Libraries - during normal operating hours, including limited evening and weekend hours
- Regional Service Centers - during normal operating hours, including limited evening and weekend hours
- EOB/COB - after normal business hours and weekends for community use. Most of the time during normal business hours space is booked to County departments.
- Schools -
 - M-F 6:00 am until the start of the school day (which ranges between 7:20 in high schools to 9:15 in elementary schools).
 - M-F - after-school ends until 10:30 pm (school ending times range from 2:10 in high schools until 3:30 in elementary schools). MCPS labor agreements provide one hour of after-school use of individual classrooms by teachers, delaying classroom availability for community use, unless granted permission by the principal.
 - Sat. – Sun. 7:00 am to midnight (open all days of the year, except Thanksgiving Day).
 - Use of gymnasiums varies with school type and time of year.

Table 1: Approximate Time Available for Community Use

	Room	Spring - MAR 15 - JUN 1 Fall - AUG 15 - NOV 15			Winter (Basketball Season) NOV 15 - MAR 15		
		M-F	Sat	Sun	M-F	Sat	Sun
Two-Gym High Schools	Main	7-10:30pm	12 noon-11pm	7am -11pm	9-10:30pm	5-11 pm	7am -11pm
Two-Gym High Schools	Small	7-10:30pm	12 noon-11pm	7am -11pm	7-10:30pm	2-11 pm	7am -11pm
Middle Schools with Gyms		5:30-10:30 pm	7am -11pm	7am -11pm	aft 5:30pm	7a-11p	7am -11pm
Elementary Schools with Gyms		4- 10:30 pm	7am -11pm	7am -11pm	aft 5:30pm	7a-11p	7am -11pm

The schools are no less busy during the summer. Nearly every school is used for summer school, teacher/staff training, head start, and a variety of workshops. Along side these programs, CUPF schedules camps and ongoing community use. A minimum of two weeks at the end of August are unavailable for community use to allow schools to prepare for the start of the school year.

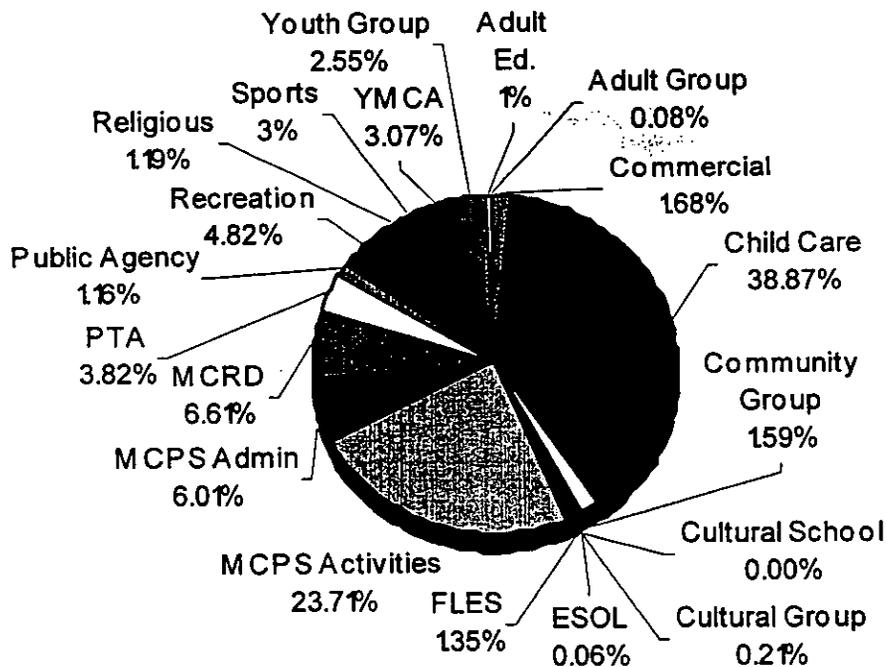
Priority of Use

Community use of schools must not interfere with school's instructional activities. Scheduling windows were instituted to allow schools two opportunities during the school year to establish their calendars and reserve space prior to consideration of all other requests. Space is then booked for community users according to the following order, starting with applications submitted during the window.

- Child Care (during the school year for before/after-school care only)
- PTA
- County/municipal agencies
- Other publicly supported programs such as colleges or universities
- All other community organizations
- Non-County based groups and groups with less than 2/3 County resident membership
- Business/corporate organizations

Consideration may be given to historical use when groups with the same priority ranking are competing for the same space. As a result of this process, the majority of use scheduled immediately at the end of the school day benefits youth, which is reflected in the chart below. Additional charts in the appendix (Charts 3-4) show use according to a number of dimensions, including use for all time periods: M-F before 6:00 pm, M-F after 6:00 pm, and weekends/holidays.

Chart A - Free, Paid and Administratively Booked* Hours Monday-Friday Before 6:00 pm by Account Type, FY06



*Note: Individual elementary and middle schools and the four high schools with centralized booking capability can enter administrative bookings. Unrecorded use of school facilities authorized by the school staff varies from school to school. Generally

CUPF is aware of activities in elementary and middle schools due to centralized scheduling, however hours tracked at non-centrally scheduled high schools cannot be completely and accurately assessed at this time.

Activity

All building use requests are screened for type of activity scheduled to ensure that it is an appropriate use of the space and will not damage property, or create health or safety concerns. All activities sponsored by groups, individuals, and organizations must be open to the general public, and may not be restrictive or discriminate by reason of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or color. Users must also agree to the conditions of use and comply with restriction requirements when signing the Facility Use License Agreement (Attachment 3). Prohibited activities include:

- Personal or private celebrations (birthday/anniversary celebrations, wedding receptions, and other similar activities)
- Dances, unless sponsored by the school, public recreation departments or PTA groups
- Car washes or any other activity that utilizes large quantities of water
- Indoor soccer, lacrosse, hockey, cricket, football, baseball or other traditional outdoor sports; exceptions to this policy can only be granted by the MCPS Director of Athletics
- Use or possession of alcohol or other intoxicants
- Gambling - bingo, lotteries, etc., except as permitted by state law with appropriate permits and/or licenses
- Smoking, fires, grills, open flames or flammable materials
- Possession of weapons, firearms, or ammunition

Affordability

The ICB has established a tiered fee schedule ranging from free use of schools after normal school hours by MCPS to higher rates for commercial groups. An effort is made to balance affordability while still meeting CUPF's financial commitments. Attachment 4, Comparison of Rates for Use of Area Schools by Community Groups, illustrates the County's success in this area. An estimated 98 percent of community users are non-profit groups and are charged nominal rates. For example, most groups providing after-school programs are charged a reduced fee of only \$5.00 per classroom per hour and \$8.00 for other rooms, out of which CUPF reimburses the schools on an hourly basis of \$1.25 for maintenance, between \$.30 - \$.50 for custodial supplies, and a prorated portion of the utilities costs and staff costs. Rates are higher after 6:00 pm and on weekends to facilitate recovery of costs. During weekends and holidays, users are charged building service workers (whose union contract includes a three hour minimum) and clean up costs.

A Typical Week

Through the matching process, CUPF is providing guidance to community users and working collaboratively with school staff toward a successful placement. Attachment 5, Community Use (CU) Usage History, illustrates a typical week of school and community use in Montgomery County schools.

Use of Public Facilities for Out of School Time Programs

[Exit this survey >>](#)

1.

Thank you for taking the time to answer a few questions about your use of public space to deliver out of school time programming in Montgomery County. Your confidential responses will help the County Council understand the extent to which public space is available to meet the need for out of school time activities for children and youth in Montgomery County.

1. How would you characterize the nature of your organization?

Public Agency

Private, nonprofit organization (including faith groups)

For profit business

Other (please specify)

2. What age range describes the population that your out of school time program serves? (check all that apply)

Birth to 2

Ages 3-4

Ages 5-10

Ages 11-13

Age 14-18

Adult

3. What out of school time activities does your organization support? (check all that apply)

Sports or other physical activities

Educational activities

Social activities

Arts activities

Day care activities

Other (please specify)

7

4. If you use public school space for out of school time activities, do you book space through the Community Use of Public Facilities office (CUPF)?

Yes

No, I book directly with the school.

5. How many times have you attempted to book public space through CUPF for out of school time programming between September 2006-August 2007?

6. Of the times that you attempted to book public space through CUPF for out of school time activity between September 2006-August 2007, how many times were you successful in booking space ?

7. Of the times that you attempted to book public space through CUPF for out of school time activity between September 2006-August 2007, how many times were you unsuccessful in booking your 1st or 2nd choice of facility?

8. Of the times that you were unsuccessful in booking your 1st or 2nd choice of facility, at what location in the county were you attempting to book space? (check all that apply)

Bethesda

Gaithersburg

Germantown

Northeast County: Clarksburg, Damascus, Laytonsville

Northwest County: Darnestown, Poolesville, Boyds

Rockville

Silver Spring/Langlely Park

Wheaton

Other (please specify)

9. Of the times that you were unsuccessful in booking your 1st or 2nd choice of public facility, what type of space were you attempting to book? (check all that apply)

School gym

8

School auditorium

School cafeteria or multipurpose room

School classroom

School athletic field

Other (please specify)

10. Of the times that you were unsuccessful in booking your 1st or 2nd choice of public facility, what time were you seeking to book? (check all that apply)

Weekday morning

Weekday, between 2-6 p.m.

Weekday, after 6 p.m.

Weekend, anytime

School holiday, anytime

Other (please specify)

11. If your organization provided out of school time activities in locations other than public facilities booked through CUPF, where did you provide them? (check all that apply)

School space booked directly through school

Offices owned or rented by your organization

Church or synagogue

At someone's home

Other (please specify)

12. If your organization provided out of school time activities in locations other than public facilities booked through CUPF, which rate adequately summarizes how much you paid for a single use?

\$0

\$1-19

\$20-49

\$50-100

\$101+

13. If your organization did not attempt to book public space through CUPF for out of school time activities sponsored by your organization between September 2006-August 2007, why not?

Didn't know about CUPF

Rates are too high

Have been previously unsuccessful in booking desired space through CUPF and do not try anymore

Other (please specify)

14. If your organization had access to all the space it could use, what additional out of school time programming would you offer and where would you offer it to meet the demand for services?

Done >>