


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	19-484	Meeting:	November 4, 2019
	Agenda Item:	39	Roll Call:	19-1732
	Submitted by:	Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Approval of agreement with Des Moines Independent Community School District (School District) for providing youth scholarships at Des Moines Parks and Recreation (Parks) activities.

SYNOPSIS:

Staff recommend approval of an agreement between Parks and the School District for the creation of a Youth Recreational Scholarship Program. This program would allow all Des Moines Public Schools students who are enrolled in the Free/Reduced Price Meal Program to automatically qualify for 50% off all youth sports registrations and \$5 group swim lessons through Parks.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: Estimated cost of \$20,435

Funding Source: \$11,067 - FY2020 Operating Budget, Park and Recreation, Athletics and Sports Tourism, G001 PK201263, page 170; \$9,368 - FY2020 Operating Budget, Park and Recreation, Pools, G001 PK201261, page 168.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- In 2012, Parks and the School District created a partnership to provide youth sports activities for school district students and Des Moines residents. Parks has had responsibility for registration and facilitation of programs with the School District providing access to facilities. It has been a joint effort to promote these programs.
- Currently, Des Moines residents can go through a process to qualify for the Greater Des Moines Recreational Activity Scholarship Program (GRASP). Qualification for this program is based on household income. Parks has an agreement with IMPACT Community Action to handle the process of approving residents for the benefits of GRASP. Some current Parks participants, who do not qualify for GRASP, may be eligible for this new benefit.
- A concept was developed in which all Free/Reduced Price Meal Program enrolled students would automatically qualify for a 50% discount off youth sports registrations and \$5 group swim lessons. Both discounts exist in GRASP, but this approach would eliminate several steps for the School District students. In addition, the eligibility of GRASP discounts are still available for those who complete that process.

- Programs eligible for this program include:
 - Swimming lessons
 - Youth basketball
 - Youth volleyball
 - Youth flag football
 - Youth soccer
- Goals for the program include the expansion of youth services in the community and to have all students be involved in an extracurricular activity by the time they exit the fifth grade.
- In order to participate in this new program, students who are enrolled in the Free/Reduced Price Meal Program must express interest in participating with the School District. Information will then be shared with approved Parks staff to know who is approved. The list of students who “opt-in” will be updated on the first of each month.
- Parks and the School District have formalized the terms of an agreement to define each entities role in the facilitation and promotion of this program. Significant aspects of the agreement include:
 - Each party has a responsibility to protect the confidentiality of student education records and to comply with federal and state law.
 - Jointly market the program at least four (4) times annually at the beginning of each semester and once a month after through electronic communication with student parent/guardians and on social media.
 - The School District agrees that it will not enter into any other agreement with a third party to offer a similar discount program for the specific athletic or aquatic programs described in the agreement for its students with the following, except if third party is a tax supported entity (i.e. another Iowa city government, Polk County, other school district, etc.) or the third-party discount program meets or exceeds the level of scholarship, provided by the Youth Recreational Scholarship Program.
- Upon approval, the program will begin on January 1, 2020. The School District will prepare a report of how many students use the program during the 2020 calendar year will share the report with the Parks and Recreation Director.
- If support for the program becomes part of any budgetary reduction consideration, both Parks and the School District have agreed to address those concerns to enable the program to continue to be available to eligible students.
- This scholarship program will be available to an estimated 17,000 School District students, that currently qualify for the Free/Reduced Price Meal Program. It is anticipated that this program will provide opportunities for new participants in Parks programs and for previous participants to now become eligible for discounted registration fees through this program. Despite a projected increase in overall participation of as many as 500, between the included programs, the anticipated net cost of these changes is \$20,435.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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