

**COVENTRY**

# Board approves before school program at Hopkins Hill

## Principal says community has a need for morning child care

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**COVENTRY** — Last week the Coventry School Committee approved a proposed before-school program at Hopkins Hill Elementary, designed to help families with childcare needs in the morning.

According to Hopkins Hill Elementary Principal Kathy Tancrelle, who proposed the program to the school committee in July, the school used a lottery system to enroll students. Parents were asked to register for the program by August 29, when they held a drawing to choose 20 families.

“Our goal is to continuously evaluate to determine opportunities for expansion, none which would have been possible without your support and interest,” Tancrelle said in an email to parents on Saturday.

In July, Tancrelle, who is in her sixth year as principal at the school, explained that between 45 and 46 percent of families there are eligible for free and reduced lunch, which indicates there are a lot of working people in the community. School starts at 9:05 a.m. this year for Hopkins Hill students, which is when many parents need to be at work or well on their way, she pointed

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out.

Tancrelle conducted an informal survey of families and staff to make sure there was enough interest. Thirty-one families responded, with 36 children total in need of spots. Some families will be placed on a waiting list.

In the past families utilized a YMCA sponsored before-school program that has stopped running, but since it closed parents have been expressing a need for child care in the early morning.

Tancrelle and the school committee agreed on one teacher and one teacher's

assistant to staff the program for now, with the possibility of adding additional staff in the future. Families will pay a flat \$30 fee per week and the program will run from 7:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. They will revisit it in December to determine whether the program can sustain more students, either starting in January or for the start of the next school year.

In other Hopkins Hill news, the PTA will be hosting an Ice Cream Social and Outdoor Movie Night for students and families on Sept. 15. One of the school's kindergarten teachers, Deanna Cotoia Medici, was recently accepted into a principal internship program at the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE) in Providence. She will

be able to participate in the two-year program while still working with Hopkins Hill students.

"I am very excited to be working with her in this capacity," Tancrelle said. "It's a win-win because we will all benefit from the early childhood special education background that she already brings to her students and their families."

This year Hopkins Hill is working with a theme called "The Leader in You," with a goal of fostering and developing leaders and demonstrating the different ways to be a leader. The school will also be partnering with the Coventry Public Library this year to offer students some additional programming opportunities.