

# Survey Shines a Light on the Medford AfterSchool Crisis

The following data and testimonials were collected via an informal survey conducted by [@parentsworkingforbettermps@gmail.com](mailto:@parentsworkingforbettermps@gmail.com) in order to confirm that the lack of adequate afterschool programming in our town is in fact a crisis for working families.

## How can we call this a crisis?

Medford continues to grow and after-school care far lags demand; here are the numbers to prove it:

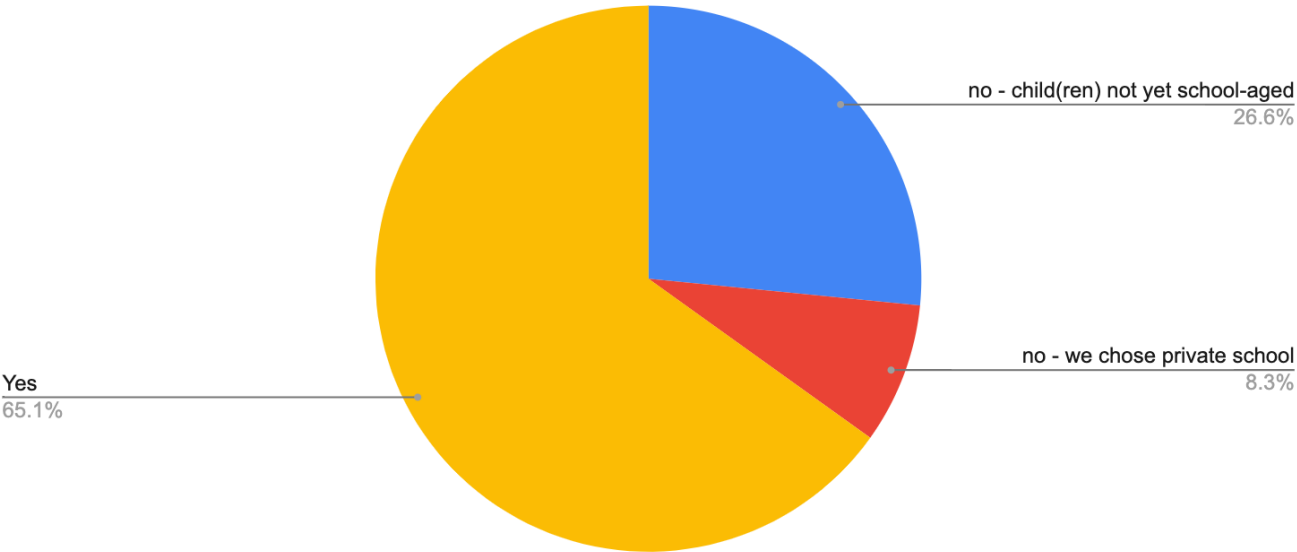
- In 2022 there are fewer students in MPS after-school care than in 2018, 2019, or 2020
- While enrollment has declined, demand has increased substantially;
  - In 2019 there were 50 families on the waitlist;
  - today there are 144 families on the waitlist
- **Over 78% of new applicants did not get into the program!**

*(all values from public records received March 24, 2022 and March 12, 2021)*

## Who responded to the survey?

Survey Start Date: March 19th; As of May 16th we have 192 responses

Q1: Do you have a child in Medford public schools?



## **Of the 125 families with a child enrolled at an MPS school**

- **only 21% (26) are in the MPS based after-school program; of those....**
  - 42% (11) got in the program because of an older sibling already enrolled
  - 42% (11) were enrolled through the lottery
  - Three families were enrolled off the waitlist (*one after four years waiting...*)
  - One family was enrolled five years ago before there was a lottery / waitlist
- **53% (66) of families are on the waitlist via the lottery**
- **At least 11% of families were not aware of the lottery** and had to make their own arrangements
- And a few other families either chose not to sign up for the lottery because word of mouth provided insight that it was unlikely to fall in the family's favor or they already had support, or worse because they are afraid there is no support for their child with special needs

**Respondents to the survey cover all of MPS, including families in the following elementary districts: Brooks, Roberts, McGlynn, and Missituck**

### **Additional community interest in this topic:**

- **Over 11% of respondents have school-aged children enrolled in private school; Most commented a core driver choosing private over MPS was lack of after school care**
- **Over 26% of respondents have children in preschool / pre-K and are already very concerned about the lack of after-school care; word is spreading in the community that this is a crisis and families are already feeling tremendous stress - or even regretting the move to Medford, MA**

## **Response to Solving After-School Care on Our Own:**

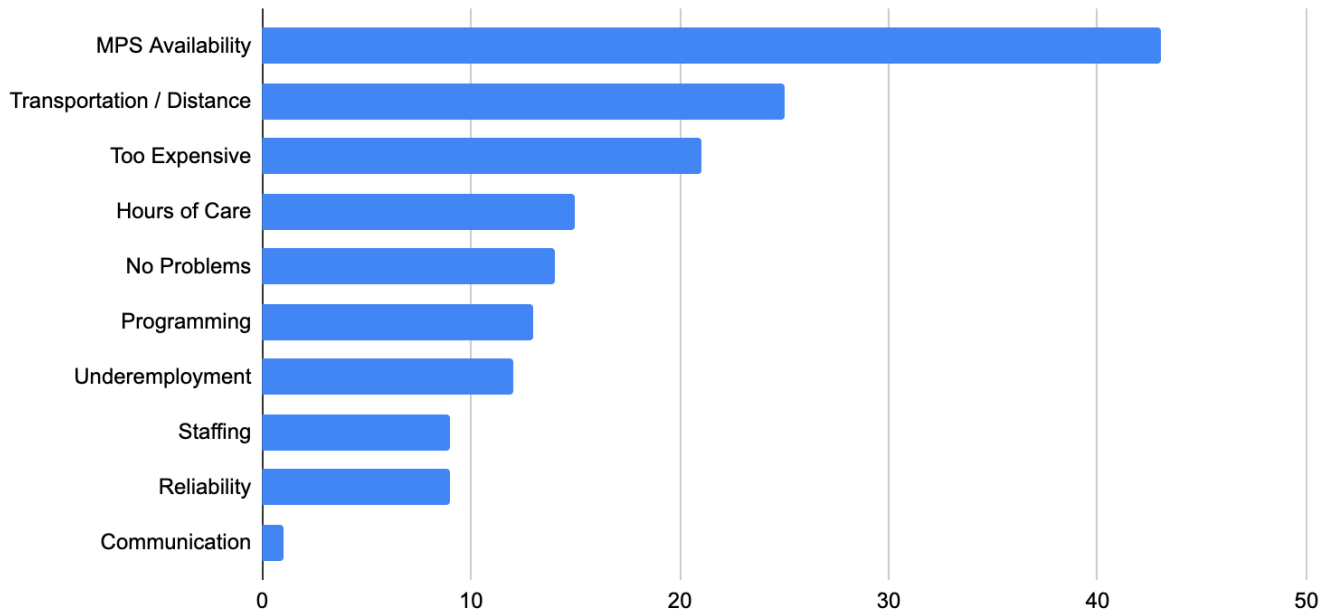
**Of the 99 families at MPS who are not in the MPS after-school program:**

97% would participate in the after-school program (at least part-time) if more space was available

**Of the families with preschool / Pre-K aged children: 100% desire to have a spot in the MPS afterschool program at kindergarten enrollment**

**No one wants to solve a systemic city crisis on our own... why not?**

**We asked respondents about the general problems / concerns they have solving for afterschool care....**



## Community Impact: Testimonials

**We asked respondents: please provide an impact statement about how the limited options of afterschool programming has impacted you and your family?**

***"I had to stop working"***

***"We have to go with private school simply because MPS failed to offer after school care, and we are not ready to leave Medford yet."***

***"I don't want to see our neighbors moving away because schools are not supporting them." - concerned city resident***

***"The aftercare we use at the private school is working out well."***

***"The private care I was forced to coordinate for my child due to lack of capacity in the MPS program is **too expensive**"***

***"The distance to our private afterschool care is a challenge for us; we need to leave outside of our elementary school zone for care."***

***"I could not get into an established afterschool program; I had to make arrangements on my own."***

***"I got in after being waitlisted for a year and a half. It was stressful- families should have better care options"***

***"My son participates in Salem Street Studio. The bus transportation from school is critical, but as a one car family with an unvaccinated child under 5 (not yet eligible), we are not yet taking public transit, so it's very difficult to have both parents get full work days in and drive to the other side of the highway to pick my son up from SSS. Also, he enjoys the program, but they don't offer any support with homework completion, so we are looking to move him somewhere that allows time for that before he gets too old and starts getting more homework."***

***"the staff [at MPS] are great, but they need more of them"***

***"We are concerned we will not be able to send our son to Brooks (two blocks from our house) due to a lack of after school availability."***

***"There isn't enough space for all the children that need care."***

***"It's a shame that MPS has been consistently failing to offer after school! It's a different time that 10 years ago with so many working parents, changes must happen now!"***

***"We got off the waitlist at the very end of the summer. The lack of options created significant stress for my family. I would like to continue to support our community in expanding care. If there are more happy parents, there are more happy kids and a more happy community." -***

***"I am very anxious about my child being accepted to after school care in Medford for next fall, especially given how few other options besides school based care there are."***

***"Our child got into the MPS program via the lottery. Overall we are very pleased. We would like smaller clusters but larger total enrollment. More supervision within each cluster, more homework help, more communication (weekly letter with themes, activities and updates for the week), a social/independence report card. While relatively inexpensive compared to others it is still a HUGE amount for us as a single income family. Would like options for weekly clubs 2:30-3:00 snack, 3:00-4:00 clubs, 4:00-5:00 HW and tutoring, 5:00-5:45 free choice, 5:45-5:55 clean up. (eg various sports, legos, theatre, book, gardening, cooking...)"***

***"We originally had a nanny this year - luckily when she quit we were able to get in on a slot (previously waitlisted) at Salem Street. We like it, but would prefer after school care at Brooks for several reasons"***

***"It would be great to have an after school sports program, 1-5 day options."***

***"Our children are currently in preschool that runs 745am-530p. We don't yet know how we will manage when they reach elementary level."***

*"We will be applying for MPS next year, but have heard from several parents that spots are competitive"*

***"I'm worried there won't be space for my son in the after school program at Brooks."***

*"When my oldest child was entering Kindergarten, I did not get into afterschool care lottery despite arriving at MHS around 6am to get in line. I was not comfortable putting my 5yo on a bus across the city to the Karate center or alternate locations. Also, I needed a rotating schedule, not a set schedule of days due to my husbands job. I was forced to enroll in a local parochial school as the aftercare is flexible and is only used when needed and charged an hourly rate. Every year I look up Medford afterschool care and it actually costs less for me to send my 3 kids to parochial school rather than pay for 5 days of before and after care. I am relatively happy with my school choice but my kids need some special Ed services that I fear they are missing out on, plus the added benefit of neighborhood school friends. **With Medford home prices as high as they are two parents have to work. MPS can easily add staff and run an afterschool program. I work in a neighboring school district and we don't have these problems.** Families can sign up and attend at their school without these ridiculous limits that only Medford seems to have. I also think there is ample opportunity for Medford students to help out and run a program. We have ample space at MHS and vocational students looking to work in child care field. This can be an easy fix. "*

***"Getting in via the lottery felt better than winning the actual lottery!"*** - relieved parent

***"Both of my boys are forced out of MPS simply due to the constant failure of after school programs. We have raised the concerns to school committees and Superintendent for a few years in row., Nothing has been done! This'll be THE reason we tax payers leave Medford. "***

***"I am very frustrated by the lack of clarity regarding the lottery. I thought it was a fresh lottery every year, but it appears that it's just the first year (K for most), and after that you have "secured a spot on the wait list", but if your first lottery draw was near the bottom (like mine supposedly was), this just means you are cemented into a terrible spot for the next six years. Also, the lack of transparency and refusal to tell parents what number they are on the wait list and how many people total are on the wait list makes it impossible to judge whether I should give up on the school after care program and try to develop a better alternative for my family now rather than waste a few years waiting for something that's highly unlikely to come, and also raises questions about how legitimate the lottery actually is."***

*"The lack of available after-school care, especially for K-2 grades, came as a complete shock as we navigated entry of our oldest child into MPS, and caused an incredible amount of extra stress and frustration as we came to realize that there was no available spot for us in established options. **This problem seems particularly bad in Medford compared to other neighboring towns, and is a very real civic problem that impacts Medford's desirability as a place to raise a young family.** We desperately want more options in place before our 2nd child enters MPS, and have been warning every parent of a child < 5 yrs old what is the current reality."*

*"We have been unable to find after school care in Medford and are concerned this will prevent families from wanting to come to Medford (and **makes us consider moving to a town with more options when otherwise that would not be on the table**)"*

*"It is stressful as a household with two working parents to not have easy access to basic care for your child. An enrichment program is great, but most parents are looking for a program that is safe, equitable, and fun. Entrance to the Medford after school program is not managed in an equitable manner. We have been on the waitlist for 3 years and the program director has told us we will never get in. We are waiting for a child in the same grade level to leave the program for spots to open up. I have lived and owned a home in Medford for 12 years. **This is the biggest issue that I have .**"*

*"We just moved to Medford and we're shocked to hear from local friends about the limited options for after school at Brooks. **Had we known this it may have affected our decision to move to West Medford** with a plan to attend MPS vs communities with robust and easy access after school programs for their public schools. We are a two working parent households and reliable after school is extremely important when our son enters Kindergarten in 2023."*

*"We actually considered selling our house and moving because we couldn't afford a nanny. We got lucky because COVID hit and we were working from home until we got into aftercare. **If we didn't get into aftercare we would not have stayed in Medford.**"*

*"Medford is a thriving city with lots of young families, but we are significantly behind the times. Our system assumes 1 parent (usually the woman) is staying home or working part time / limited hours. That is not a 2022 reality. **If you want to support working parents - particularly working women, who are disadvantaged in the professional world as is - put your money and priorities where your mouth is and provide public school offerings that reflect a normal 8 hour working day.** I am privileged enough that I could afford after care, but that does me no good if nothing is actually available. I would happily pay more in taxes or care cost to subsidize lower income families so no one has to compromise care and career opportunities. I know so many that would feel the same. We need to do better. "*

*"**Not having a secured spot for my son is making me very anxious about him starting school. My husband and I can't change our work schedules to pick him up at 2:30,** so I truly don't know what we will do if we don't get a spot at the Brooks after school program."*

*"Our current situation is fine for the time being but we would much rather be at the MPS after school program at Brooks. **To my knowledge there are only 2 afterschool programs outside the MPS ones. That does not offer much choice and is definitely not able to sustain the community need.** We were very lucky to get a spot. The need for childcare coverage during school vacation weeks and teacher professional days needs to be addressed as well. MPS and our afterschool program both close during these school days off. What are working families supposed to do during these days?"*

*"Was a real concern when I was considering returning to the workforce. I didn't know how I would be able to get my son from school at 2:30 if I had a new job."*

"I want to support the Medford public school system. But because we did not get a spot in the aftercare lottery, **we chose private school. I'm saddened not to be a part of the public school community.** "

"If we did not get in via the lottery, we would have been so stuck. **It would have drastically affected our quality of life and our jobs.**"

"I work in Longwood and it is very difficult for me to get back to medford in time for pick up. "

"The fact that it is a lottery or first come first serve. We are not "from around here" and don't have relatives nearby to help so we needed something definite and long term. My husband works 80+ hours a week so drop off and pick up also would fall on me. **The timing of care provided is not effective either.** I work typically M-F 730-4. I ride the train to MGH. So that means the train at 7 and home 430. Most programs don't accommodate those hours"

"We are so disappointed to be denied a spot in the Brooks after school for the second year now. **Almost no kindergarteners (who didn't have a sibling already in the program) were admitted. How is this equitable?** "

"We were luck to get into the lottery with my first child and her sibling will join next year. I love most of the staff but so question the structure and oversight provided at times given the stories and things I've witnessed at pick up. I'd like to know there's more enrichment, but understand it should also be a more fun relaxed time for the kids. Maybe more free clubs and groups to join."

"[The inability to get into the MPS afterschool program] was one of the major reasons I **just decided to go private school instead.** I couldn't get the private programs to even respond to me and when I finally reached someone there was a huge waitlist already"

"I am an educator in a neighboring district and it is impossible to drop off my child next year in kindergarten and keep my job. **Reliable options need to be available both before & after school for those who need it. Not only should there be space available but also they should have the capacity to accept new students throughout the year.** I have seen Medford (seemingly) purposely make it harder for immigrants to transfer in and teenagers are sometimes forced to take care of their siblings instead of attending school. There are many other secondary impacts to not having enough childcare slots. MFN provides amazing resources for the younger residents of Medford but the wellbeing of just slightly older kids & their families seems to be overlooked. I don't want to see our neighbors moving away because schools are not supporting them. I hate that Medford seems to be driven by the needs of the ever-older "old Medford" residents. Young families need to be supported and it's the responsibility of the whole community to ensure that this happens."

*"Our child will enter MPS in fall of 2023. We are a two parent household where both parents are teachers in a district with extended school hours and multiple after school options that pick up at our elementary school.*

***We would hope the same for MPS to have before and after school options for every child that needs it - especially given the number of half-day Wednesdays. "***

***"We were lucky to get into the at-school after program when my son was in kindergarten, when it was first come first served. And we re-enrolled him each year so did not lose the space. We are very happy with the afterschool program at Missituk."***

***"When we didn't get into the Roberts after school program during our son's Kindergarten year, it was very stressful. We both work full-time and we had no idea how we were going to find after school care. Luckily, we were eventually able to get a spot at the Salem Street Studio after school program. The impact of not knowing how you will find a reliable after school program is very stressful for parents and is challenging to resolve."***

***"First and foremost, the process is not well communicated at all. In my third year of applying, it is still a mystery that requires multiple emails and follow ups to get the bare minimum poorly communicated information. It is frustrating and disheartening. Frankly, after school care should be available to all students on a sliding scale so that caregivers (mostly women) of all economic levels have the opportunity to work and not be burdened by the high cost of child care which means many of us choose to forgo it all together.***

***Secondly Our family has absorbed economic impacts that will follow us for years, as I've had to take work that is under full time to be available to pick up my child and then provide enrichment or engaged activities. I realize that this is a privilege that I can provide this but it is at the detriment to my overall earning potential. "***

***"We were very lucky. I do not know what we would have done otherwise. "***

***"I can't believe there is such a lack of options! We found out it is very unlikely we will get in next year as well. We can't continue what we're currently doing. We all work full time and we trade days where we try to occupy children for 2-3 hours each afternoon while we try to continue working."***

***"My family, despite being committed to Medford and soon to have 3 students at Brooks, is desperate for them to have an opportunity to participate in the quality afterschool programming without having to deal with busing and less developed programming elsewhere. Because I did not wait in line at 5 in the morning 4 years ago to get a spot when my son was in kindergarten, we have been at a substantial disadvantage. Additionally, despite the abundance of space at MHS to house to program community members identified last year, the district was unwilling to support it. This is not good enough nor equitable to the children of medford."***



*"As a teacher in a public school district nearby, I have considered sending my child to that school next year for Kindergarten, instead of our neighborhood school (the Brooks), solely because the after school care options are easier to get into. I would MUCH prefer to have her in our neighborhood Medford school and frankly am embarrassed that there are so few after school care options here! If we want Medford to continue to attract and retain young families like my own, after school care is an URGENT problem that must get solved soon. "*

***"Participating in an after school program further enriches our children and helps them to develop lasting friendships outside of the normal classroom."***

***"Our family experienced significant stress and anxiety trying to figure out what to do about after school care for our kindergartner, especially because we quickly learned that unless something changes, this could be chronic, yearly stress for 10 or so years, with another child coming into the system too. We are two working parents who have worked hard to develop our careers and we are extremely disappointed and angry about the dearth of after school programming in our community. It feels like a slap in the face to me personally, as a working mother, because the whole system presumes that I will take up the slack and sacrifice what I have worked for to make up for a broken system. Not to mention that this is a shameful disservice to our kids. "***

***"We have an incoming kindergartener for the 2022-2023 school year. I started looking into before and after care in January and was surprised by the vast limitations MPS has for working parents. I am a public school teacher who needs to be at work at the same time morning care begins and can not make it in time to pick my son up after school. My husband can drop my son off at school on most days, but if he moves his day back to allow him to drop my son off, he can not pick him up from school as he works a full 8.5 hour day. He is also a member of the Coast Guard Reserves and has been recalled at least once every year the last few years. That means he could be gone up to 3 months at a time, and I, alone, am left to get my son to and from school. This is literally impossible for me with the current morning care start time. If we do not win the lottery into MPS's after school care, we are further limited. I called each of the three private after school care places MPS buses to and was told at each one they were full and didn't know if they would have any spots for next year. We are on all three waiting lists. **This is why we are currently considering sending our son to a private school.** This is not our desire. We want our son to go to the public school with other neighborhood children. **It is sad before and school care is the reason my son may not be able to access the public school in Medford.**"***

***"My child will enter kinder and with 2 parents that work full-time, the after-school options are insufficient to say the least. **Trying to figure it within our limited budget all has caused lots of stress.**"***

***"Until we got into the after school program, finding consistent afterschool care for the hours that we needed was always a stress. We had to patch care together with a mix of babysitters because they were often college age students who had other important commitments to attend to. We could never find 100% of the coverage that we needed, leading to my husband and I having to shift some of our work hours to night time. Luckily, we also have some flexibility to work from home, so we would ask our kids to play by themselves while we finished up work. Not ideal and stressful for all."***

***“One of the parents has had to reduce hours to part time”***

***“In order to have a 2 working parent family in these days (not just for economic purposes, but also for because both parents prefer to work) is nearly impossible without a cadre of after school options. We currently have a nanny who is reliable and takes care of our 4 yo (without an afterschool option) and our 7 year old after school. This costs money. Once 4 yo is ready for public school, very much would like to have both children in a single after school program.”***

***“We entered MPS in 1st grade and were told we would never get a lottery spot. They were right. We tried in 1st and 2nd for the very few openings, and did not get in. I couldn't find after school care so I had to cut my work hours, which is impacting our income and my (woman) career success.”***

***“My children attend the Brooks school and have been on the after school waitlist for 2 years and are waitlisted for next year as well.***

***In the meantime I am working less hours than I'd like in order to care for them 3 afternoons a week. My husband and I both work outside of the home and cannot easily leave work briefly to pickup and transport the kids to other after school programs. Last year we hired a sitter but I felt the quality of care was poor (she was late picking them up several times, she would watch tv with them often) so I would prefer to not hire a sitter - and have to pay for it. This year 2 afternoons per week their grandparents pick them up and drop them off at after school programs in other towns. The grandparents don't really want to have to do this and the programs are very expensive, but having to hire and pay someone to transport them would be even more expensive and less reliable. I am extremely disappointed and frustrated by the lack of after school programming in Medford. I am also very annoyed that the same families are allowed to continue with after school, year after year, while the same families remain on a waitlist year after year. I have brought this up to 5 school committee members and the mayor and they all said that “it's just the way it is because that's how it's done in other towns.” I find that answer unsatisfactory and also inequitable. In addition, there are attempts to expand the after school programming but it seems unlikely to occur in time for my children next year, or perhaps any year (they're in first and second grade right now). I have only requested the bare minimum number of days - Tuesday and Thursday- although in a perfect world we would also be able to get Wednesdays after school as well.***

***My children really WANT to attend the Brooks after school program so that they can play with their friends after school. They feel they are missing out.”***

***“Even though I love my afterschool, I have been on the waitlist for the elementary one and will still be next year. It was a nightmare trying to find afterschool care last year. We didn't know what we were going to do because my job doesn't end until after 4, and my spouse's job takes him far from Medford. It was so stressful, I was considering taking a year off, which would not have been very feasible. “***

***“We banded together with 4 other families and hired a teacher to watch our kids. It's a lot of time and logistics among other things to work this out and is only a temporary solution.”***

*"I have had to depend on family to watch my child after school and although I am very grateful, **I have to leave work to pick my child up, bring him to the babysitter and then go back to work.** This is not an ideal placement for him because it is simply not structured and he is not with other children. I feel like each school should have their own program and not lottery based. Please help support us working parents who need structured and reliable after school programs for our kiddos."*

*"**It's so hard.** Sitters often cancel or move on; when family goes on vacation it's a scramble."*

*"I would love to have my second grader participate in after school at the Roberts elementary but we haven't signed him up previously so my concern is that there won't be a spot for him at this point. **As the mom I either work mornings while my kids are at school or evenings after my husband gets home from his job. It's terrible because we're spending less and less time together because we need to trade off child care duties to attend to work responsibilities.** I plan to register my son for after school for next year and I'm crossing my fingers that he gets in. "*

*"We are on the waitlist at all of the afterschool programs in Medford, and were unable to get a spot for the 2021 to 2022 school year and still do not have a spot for the 2022 to 2023 school year. **We tried hiring private babysitters but they were inconsistent/unreliable and very expensive (\$23-25 p hour).** **This leaves us currently switching off days in which we leave our jobs early and provide coverage,** which we are privileged to be able to manage this right now while people are still working in hybrid models (we are also privileged that we are a 2 parent family). Often, one of us needs to cancel a meeting or miss another job responsibility because we have no childcare available. I know we can't be the only family in this position."*

*"We need to get my son into an after-school program!!"*

*"We have hired a Tufts student to pick up our son from the Brooks school. This has worked out fairly well, although as a student, sometimes his classes conflict with our afterschool needs, and of course, we're likely going to have to go through the process of finding another person next year. **It's very frustrating to have to do this, especially given that neighboring cities like Somerville have afterschool available for everyone who needs it.**"*

*"**I am unable to work full time because I can't find an after school program around Medford to be able to take of my child while I am at work.** I am really interested about after school program, I support this initiative. We need also to talk about the price for after school program as well as they are so expensive."*

*"**I've had to change my hours to 6-2 to make it home in time to pick up my kids"***

*"Having friends who have already dealt with this situation, I know we might be faced with not being able to send our son to the fantastic elementary school right in our neighborhood unless additional after school options are made available "*

***"Not getting into the after school program in Kindergarten was very stressful"***

***"Having to expand daily travel for the sake of afterschool has caused significant disruptions to our daily routines. Additionally, there has been an increased risk of COVID transmission because of the "cross-pollination" which occurs by having our child enter into a different population with after school care (his after school care has been affected by COVID multiple times; none correlating with disruptions at his school). It has simply introduced additional complications into an already complicated situation (after school care in the days of COVID)."***

***"The lack of after school care has impacted my (and my partner's) ability to work a traditional full-time job."***

***"Getting a nanny was our only solution this year for Kindergarten. We didn't get into any of the afterschool programs that are at Brooks or bussed from school. Both parents work, so midday transportation to another location was not feasible (and with the pandemic we still want to limit points of possible exposure to Covid). When our nanny had to quit we were lucky to get into a previously waitlisted program. While the nanny option worked for a bit, ultimately having our kid around other kids is optimal (and long term a nanny is not a good financial option). Options other than Brooks add to transportation/logistics issues. For our kid it makes for the sense of a long day having to spend an extra 40-50 minutes in busses/cars a day, and it's been a struggle even though the program is fine. Ultimately, care at the Brooks or closer to our home would be ideal and our preference."***

***"My family was one of the many last year who needed a spot in the MPS after-school program did not get a place. We found out about the lottery by chance and then were shocked to find out how few spots there actually were for the incoming kindergarten class based on the current system and limited capacity. When we found out we didn't get a spot we then became aware that the only two other options that exist in Medford also have long wait lists. Our family banded together with four other families at The Brooks to craft a private-after school option that we have to operate out of our homes. This is of course not ideal and more importantly many families do not have that option. Which is why we are doing everything we can to advocate for more programming in Medford that can be inclusive and available for all who need it!"***

***"My husband and I love our city, our school, and the community that we have built here - but this city has a very significant gap in available programming for afterschool."***

***"It has limited the job opportunities I could not even look at because I need to be around in the afternoon for my kids if my mother is not. We haven't found anyone personally we feel comfortable leaving our children with in our home, so an after school/care/homework study would be something we would be so thankful for."***

***"As a single mother, not having after school limits the hours I can work to provide for my children."***

***"I've had to struggle to cobble together different sitters and have had to rearrange a tight work schedule to figure out after school care. It's incredibly stressful and is really impacting my family life as well as my work life. "***

***"I have rearranged my (children's mother) schedule to be home after school. We have also considered private school that has guaranteed after school care. "***

***"Both my husband are teachers in neighboring districts. My daughter attends before school beginning at 7:30. We try to pick her up by 4:30 because it's a LONG day for her. We love her after-school program, though we definitely do not get our money's worth. "***

***"Have debated going to private school because they have more after school options. It shouldn't be this difficult or expensive to support working families. "***

***"We have a toddler going to the daycare at the high school, so we're already aware of the challenges facing two working parents trying to coordinate care on a school schedule. We would support any efforts to expand after school options "***

***"As we prepare to start kindergarten next year, I am certainly feeling stress about what we'll do if we don't get one of the seemingly few lottery spots available (for us, at the Brooks). My husband and I both work full-time jobs, and while we can navigate the mornings, it would be an impossibility to manage 2:30 (and 1:30!) pick-ups. The idea that we might need to bus her somewhere distant (if we're lucky enough to get a program with a bus), or hire a nanny or babysitter to cover these hours is something I dread pursuing on top of all the other things we're managing in our lives right now. So hopeful this effort helps shine a light on the challenges for working parents, and very grateful to this crew for helping us all join voices and offer to help drive change for Medford. Wouldn't it be amazing if we could be the model town in the area for supporting young families!!! 💕 "***

***"We currently have a mix of after school activities that are quite expensive and far from home (2 hours at Mucky kids in cambridge for example) and private care 1 day a week, and various other things cobbled together. Its a constant juggling act. Schools get out basically in the middle of the day. Even an hour or 2 of additional coverage from the schools would be a game changer."***

***"I have to ask family and friends to help with care as we did not get in and were waitlisted. We are low income so we can't afford to send our kids to private care. "***

***"My child is unhappy in the afterschool program. They encourage individual play. I wish there were more activities for the children."***

***"The current afterschool spots are very limited and it is hard to get in. Nannies typically want more hours than we can provide them so it is hard to find a reliable nanny. "***

***"We'd be in real trouble if we didn't have Afterschool "***

***"It has been a pain to find alternatives that aren't in the school system, made pick up and drop off more of a pain, etc"***

***"I will have a kindergartener as of Sept 2022 and I have no idea what I will do if we don't get into one of the 2 after school care options. Yet I know this is a strong possibility. I'm already stressed about this. It seems like the assumption is either one parent works part time or you have family that is local, willing, able and safe to provide this service. Neither of which are a given, especially 2 years into a pandemic."***

***"I am unable to get a full time job as I am the primary caretaker for my daughter and her school hours do not accommodate me being able to work "***

***"Finding an afterschool solution has been an incredible strain on our family. The lack of public afterschool was a shock - plus we only found out about the lottery due to a neighbor telling us. After failing to get in, the lack of private solutions was mind-boggling. The fact that we will never get into the MPS or private programs and will have to deal with this for 5 years straight, and then again for our youngest child who is not yet in MPS - making 8 years of scrambled schedules and financial burden - is so depressing that it makes me feel defeated. The continuous passing off of responsibility highlights all the worst stereotypes of local government. With enough effort and leadership we can solve this."***

***"Fear about planning and scheduling, consideration of needing to send our child to private school just because of aftercare."***

***"Our twins are 4 years old and have been in a ludicrously expensive private preschool for the past year. We were hoping to transition them into MPS pre-k, but afterschool care is not available for their age, so we would have to hire a nanny. Also, the program does not start until 9am, which is impossible for most working parents. We would not be saving much with paying for the extra before and after care so we will probably stay at a private preschool and just suffer financially until kindergarten."***

***"Anxiety about future."***

***"We got waitlisted for the Missituk after school program in the fall. All the places that the school provides transportation to have waitlists. Both my husband and I work and are struggling to figure out how to make after school options work as we can't leave work at 2:30 every day to transport my son somewhere (if I could find a place with openings)."***

***"I am not sure what we will do for the coming school year. Both of us (parents) work full-time and can possibly cover after-school hours. We will try to find a babysitter or some other alternative but it's extremely stressful to not have a reliable option. I may need to consider private school options if there are no other alternatives."***

*"I have been trying to get my 1 daughter in after school lottery program. **I'm single mom and I also work at the school part time as lunch mother!** I need another job badly but I can't because I can't get into any after school programs! I've been trying for two years now and been waitlisted. I'm behind on my utilities , car payment, etc. **i need another part time job but I need after school help with my daughter !!** I'm writing this because I've seen it myself- they are choosing the very same kids and families every single time - not giving any other families who've been waitlisted already or any new families any chances for spots in this lottery! It's fixed clearly . And ridiculous."*

*"While we are very fortunate to have private afterschool care, but that access was established when the kids were in daycare. **It is unbelievable that families moving to Medford or with kids finally aging into school may be unable to secure after school care.** It is incredibly expensive to live in this area, many families don't have the safety net of extended family support, many families have two working caregivers, and school schedules remain stuck in 1950 assuming a stay at home mom is around to pickup at 2:30pm. **The annual shoulder shrug response to not enough spots through the public school program to fill the community need is an embarrassment. Completely outmoded thinking in the year 2022.**"*

*"**I had to leave my job and financially it has taken a toll.**"*

*"I mean we basically have to figure out how to entertain and make sure our kid is busy AND try to work etc. It's a lot. It's 2022. **We should be able to solve issues like this.**"*

*"It feels like a complete stroke of luck that we were able to get a spot for our child at a private Medford after school provider. We would not have gotten in if we hadn't been looking for care 5 days per week. The MPS after school lottery never seemed like a viable option as I held no hope we would get in, and that's really sad. **Medford is an amazing city and a wonderful place to raise kids. That we don't have after school available for every child that needs it is embarrassing.**"*

*"My needs aren't daily. I typically only need 1-2 days a week and **would love flexibility within MPS**"*

*"**It will be seriously problematic if we do not have after-school programming available once our child is school-aged.**"*

*"We are on waitlists for all aftercare programs in Medford and now also for the school provided program. Babysitters are fine but very hard to find a good, reliable one who doesn't flake after a couple months. **This is incredibly difficult to deal with and I do not understand how the city has not solved this problem with SO MANY households with two working parents. I am honestly considering selling our home and moving out of Medford over this. What a massive disappointment. I feel completely let down by this city.**"*

*"Traveling far for after school care"*

*"**I'm concerned that there will not be after school care for my kids** when they attend in the next couple years. I've heard that the waitlist is 100s long! Families mostly need two working parents in Medford."*

*"I moved to Medford and had my first kid last year. **I really want my kid to attend public schools, but my husband and I both work, so finding reliable before and after school will be required to make this possible.** It's making me really nervous to hear how widespread the issue is of being able to get after school care."*

*"**As a family with two working parents, the lack of sufficient after school care in Medford has been one of my biggest complaints about living here.** Most of the families we know have two working parents and few of them (like us) have family nearby who can pick the kids up after school. Finding a babysitter is tricky because they're not as reliable as a program that is always open. A babysitter would also have to have car booster seats in their car, another expense if we would need to buy the seats for them."*

*"**Without any family in the northeast and a husband that travels for work, reliable childcare is essential.**"*

*"**We are heading into our third year on the waitlist for afterschool care at the Brooks with no sign of ever getting off.** My spouse and I both work in-person full time jobs (essentially, what a lot of households in Medford need to do to afford housing here), and don't have the flexibility to get home to meet our child at the bus stop or transfer her to another location in another town. We are also on the waitlists for every other private after school program recommended by MPS. **We are on our third babysitter in two years, as it's really difficult to find someone who is able to work 4-5 afternoons a week, reliably get to a bus stop to meet your child, and doesn't get hired elsewhere for more hours / more pay.** The lack of stable options for childcare is an ongoing frustration."*

*"When my son turned 4 a mom friend who lives in Arlington told me I was already too late to secure after school care. I thought she was joking. She was not. I (in hindsight) ridiculously assumed the public school route would not be so hard, and, if we didn't get in I would find something else relatively quickly. Right now I am on three different after school program waitlists. The list Missituk sent us was somewhat insulting given that it was a handful of programs and all were already full. It isn't their fault, but **the system is a mess.** It doesn't look like I will be able to secure him a spot anywhere. We will try the nanny/mother's helper route, but I imagine that will be tough too. Which means, my husband and I will need to figure out how to shift our work so that we can accommodate school pick up. It's actual madness."*

***When I was pregnant, I knew finding daycare was tough. Everyone tells you that. I did not think this issue would continue once my kids were school aged!"***

*"Our preference both in terms of logistics and cost would be an afterschool program. **It's hard as two working parents to manage it all!"***

*"My husband and I both work full time—I am expected to be in the office and my husband had been remote but recently has returned 3 days a week. Although we did not get a spot in Medford after school we managed to make it work **with my husband being home when the kids got off the bus, but he is busy working and can not engage with them so the kids watch tv or play on iPads.** On the days no one is able to be home, my dad can help but he lives in NH so it is not ideal. I would very much prefer them in high quality afterschool with peers and off screens. **If we don't get into afterschool for next year, I may have to seriously consider dropping to part time unless my work can be flexible and allow me to flex my hours/work from home.**"*



***“I will eventually need to work full time and will not be able to arrange my work schedule so I don't need care.”***

***“With the cost of living in this area both parents are required to work! I work at the schools and think approximately 20% of the families in afterschool don't need the program. They need to do more research and proof is needed as to the fact these parents are working.”***

***“We chose to keep my child in private K because of Medford's lack of reliable afterschool”***

***“Until my daughter was accepted into the after school program (and I think the only reason she got accepted was because it was post-lockdown when many kids were still virtual) **this was the most stressful part of her school experience for me!** Every place had waiting lists, the costs were as high as daycare and only a few of the very few places seemed clean and well-managed. And we didn't get into those. What was left were mildewy overcrowded spaces with little cares for the child.”***

***“One of the largest factors of us choosing private school was the lack of MPS after school care. On top of the limited after school availability, the lottery system is a sham. There is only one person running it who fails to respond to weekly emails or calls for 3 months regarding the lottery date and entry. Only the week AFTER the lottery did they respond with apologies that we missed it”***

***“This is straining families and forcing taxpayers to consider moving or (to choose) private schools . I would love to use our income to support public schools. With two working parents we are forced to leave.”***

***“Recently moved to Medford with a 2.2 year old and anxious about lack of childcare options. We may have to relocate again before Kindergarten.”***