

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 3, 2017

5:00 p.m.

Spencer Borden Elementary School

1400 President Avenue

Fall River, MA 02720

A roll call at 5:08 p.m. showed:

Mr. Coogan: Present

Mrs. Panchley: Present

Mr. Martins: Present

Also present were Mr. Kevin Almeida, Principal Eric Bradley, Principal Kate Cobb, Dr. Edward Costar, Principal Tracy Curley, Ms. Jocelyn LeMaire, Principal Alicia Lisi, Ms. Lisa Moy, Mr. Ken Pacheco, Principal Brian Raposo, Mr. Tom Rose, Principal MaryEllen Shaw, and Ms. Fatima Silva

Mr. Martins read the Open Meeting Law. A salute to the flag followed.

1. Budget for Group 2 Elementary and K-8 Schools (Spencer Borden, Fonseca, Letourneau, Doran, Henry Lord, and Stone)

Spencer Borden

Principal Cobb stated that, in the budget that she was bringing forward, most of the positions are the same for the upcoming year. They are utilizing the staff in their school to support students and teachers. Last year, they made good gains in ELA and math at every grade level. They took a little bit of a dip in science so they will be focusing more on science this year. They opened up a science lab and classrooms are rotating in the science lab. The science instructional leadership team has been working closely with Jen Saunders at Morton to implement the new science standards. The positions that she has are the same for the upcoming year. The only change that she has is the conversion of a Grade 3 teacher to a Grade 4 teacher which is based on enrollment.

Mrs. Panchley asked how many 3rd graders Spencer Borden had. Principal Cobb answered that there were close to 100. The average class size was 26.

Mr. Martins pointed out that Spencer Borden has not yet met their targets. He doesn't have any problems with the budget. He wants to see Spencer Borden meet their targets. He asked Principal Cobb if she was satisfied with the budget that she has. Principal Cobb stated that the budget has worked this year and thinks that it can work again. Mr. Martins asked how much money has been expended for professional development. He is concerned because quite a bit of money has been expended on professional development. While he believes in professional development, he hasn't seen significant growth. He asked if there was any class at Spencer Borden that would be better off with another paraprofessional. Principal Cobb replied that any classroom at any school would benefit from having additional support. Mr. Martins agreed. He wondered if the scores would be higher if Spencer Borden did co-teaching or had another paraprofessional in the classroom. Principal Cobb said that they have three special education

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inclusion teachers and they have paraprofessionals that work in classrooms. They have four special education and inclusion paras who work alongside classroom teachers and students. She would like to have a para in every classroom. Mr. Martins thinks it would be a good idea to have a para in every classroom but he questions how they would pay for it.

Mr. Almeida stated that salary and benefits make up 80% of the budget. He would love to provide principals with the resources that they need for their school but there are a lot of fixed costs that eat up the remainder of the budget. Mr. Martins stated that mostly every grant he is aware of has an acceptable usage cost that can be used for other areas than what the grant was intended for. He would like to see grants used to close the achievement gap. Mr. Almeida said that professional development is typically paid for out of grants. It's based on need so there is not a designated amount for each school. Mr. Martins believed that instead of using money on professional development, it should be used to fund another classroom teacher for classrooms that need dual teaching.

Transcriber's Note: At 5:22 pm, Superintendent Malone entered the meeting.

Mr. Martins said that he would like to know the total amount of money that was spent on professional development in the last three years.

Fonseca

Mr. Almeida announced that there was one correction made to the proposed Fonseca budget and provided the Committee with a handout. Superintendent Malone added that there was an oversight in the line item for one teacher FTE that should have been in there. Mr. Almeida also stated that they added a section in the grant section because they're applying for SRG funding along with the Level 4 status that they're getting.

Principal Lisi stated that there were a couple of conversions in their budget since they will be transforming from a five-unit school to a four-unit school. In the first year, they are going to be reducing to four kindergarten classrooms to be enrolled. In place of that additional kindergarten teacher and paraprofessional, they're going to be having a K1 room, which is an all-day program for 4-year-olds. The teacher and paraprofessional that was in the kindergarten class will then be the K1 teacher and paraprofessional. One of the teachers that was considered an ELL inclusion teacher will be converting to a kindergarten ELL Newcomer teacher. Out of the four kindergartens they're enrolling, one of them will be enrolling ELL Newcomer students for Levels 1 to low 3. They also have one teacher who is moving from one grade level to another. There's an addition of a kindergarten para that was on a grant but was absorbed in the operating budget. As they progress, they're going to be looking at the numbers. Instead of having five 5th grade classrooms next year, because their numbers are so low in 4th grade, they will have four 5th grade classrooms. They are also looking at converting the administrative intern to a redesign coach since they are a Level 4 school and they will need help monitoring the grant paperwork. That would be through the Title I grant. In the School Redesign Grant, they're going to be able to house a second K1 4-year-old classroom. That would be coming out of the redesign grant. They would also be adding a student support coordinator and a bilingual parent outreach coordinator. They also have three paraprofessionals paid by the Title I grant.

Superintendent Malone stated that the School Committee will be receiving the final draft of Fonseca's Turnaround Plan. He will submit that to the commissioner on Friday. Once that's done, they will work

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on the application for the School Redesign Grant. The plan is the first part of the grant application. What they have been told is that they are likely to receive around \$1.5 million for the three-year turnaround at Fonseca which is consistent with what past schools have received.

Mrs. Panchley asked if there will be more positions than this. Superintendent Malone said that they will be extending the learning time. He added that the budget that Principal Lisi described was exactly in line with the turnaround plan. Over the next four years, the school will become a four-unit school but they're adding a grade. There will be 100 4-year-olds in the building four years from now. In their grant, they are also building a new STEAM Center, which will blend the traditional art and traditional technology together. They will be doing art, technology, and makerspace activities. The current library will become the Library/STEAM Media Center.

Mrs. Panchley said that she had confidence in Principal Lisi and the people she has on board to work on the turnaround. She loves the idea of a K1 class because she feels that they need to have more preschool.

Mr. Coogan said that he thought they were trying to create space at Fonseca. Principal Lisi said that she has planned out what Fonseca would look like over the next five years with the classes being moved and how people would move throughout the building. There is space that will become available based on where people will be moving. Instead of having a separate art class, they are making it a part of the STEAM room. Superintendent Malone added that they're currently doing art in the classroom but they're going to have a special location for art.

Mr. Martins noticed, in looking at Fonseca's proposed budget, that they have a lot of open positions. Superintendent Malone said that Fonseca has 50% of their faculty for next year. The other 50% are open positions based on the process that they worked out with the FREA on the transformation process. When a school becomes a Level 4 school, there are three choices they can make: turnaround, transformation, or restart. What's worked in the past is the transformation model which allows the schools to opt out teachers but it also allows teachers, if they don't want to be there, to opt themselves out. In that process, they got about 14 teacher openings and 30 total teacher openings. They're in the process right now of filling those classroom teacher positions. These are teachers within the system that will go there and there were other folks who were displaced that can also go there. There will also be some teachers that they hire because they could lose some teachers to another system. Mr. Martins said that losing teachers to other systems has been a long-standing problem. Superintendent Malone said that it has been better this year because they haven't had to lay anyone off and they have not heard any more teachers wanting to leave. Retention is the #1 issue.

Mr. Martins asked what the asterisk next to a certain item means. Mr. Almeida answered that, when looking at class sizes, the asterisk indicates that is a place they have to look at and may have to move students out. Superintendent Malone confirmed that they will have to move some kids to different schools to get the class sizes down.

Mr. Martins asked if Fonseca has assistance in their 1st grade classroom which has 28 students. Principal Lisi answered that there was a paraprofessional in the classroom. They have a total of eight paraprofessionals.

Mr. Martins stated that, based on the MCAS scores, Fonseca has a long way to go. He said that there are some schools that are doing extremely well and other schools are having difficulty but he doesn't think that the teachers are the problem. He thinks that the students need more help. He's going to continue to push for the use of grants for the purpose of hiring additional people and cutting back on grants being used for professional development. Superintendent Malone said that grant dollars are being used for additional support. He said that Principal Lisi has made some really smart decisions that included the K1 teacher and para. Mr. Martins agreed but said that it's a temporary amount of money. Superintendent Malone hopes that it can be built into the budget in the next couple of years. Mr. Martins stated that the median income for a family of four in Fall River is \$36,000. He asked where the money was going to come from. He thinks the School Department is still going to struggle to get 1% over net school spending. Mr. Martins thinks a lot of money has been spent on professional development. Superintendent Malone does not feel that the budget he brought forward in professional development was excessive. They're doing their best to make sure that the money is being spent and going directly into the classroom. The problem is that a lot of the grant dollars have positions attached to them. There isn't much spending on grants right now for professional development because of that.

Letourneau

Principal Raposo started by saying that Letourneau was a Level 3 school with a very high population of English learners. They are currently preschool-5th grade. They have two preschool classrooms and in K-5 they have one Newcomer classroom for English language learners. They are not recommending any additions to their budget.

Mr. Martins asked Principal Raposo if he thought that he would be better off if he had different teachers. Superintendent Malone stated that Letourneau is a school on the move. He predicts that five years from now, Letourneau will be a Level 1 school. Principal Raposo understands that the students need support but one of the ways they get support is by building up the capacity of their staff. He has paraprofessionals who are interventionists, pushing into classrooms. They also have to build up their teachers because they need to know the best way to reach the students. They've been strategic with paraprofessionals. They've created specific ESL paraprofessionals because they have so many Newcomer students. They have about 240 Newcomers in the building, which is the highest in the district. It is different to work with someone who is an English language learner and someone who is not an English language learner. There is a certain skill set one needs to know in order to move children along.

Mr. Martins asked Principal Raposo to determine how much Letourneau has spent on professional development in the last three years. Superintendent Malone stated that Mr. Almeida will gather that information and break it down for the Committee by school.

Mr. Martins pointed out that it takes a lot of effort to bring the MCAS scores up. He reiterated the use of grants for additional support for students. Principal Raposo stated that they have several positions out of the Title I grant and they have been very aggressive with Title I funds.

Superintendent Malone stated that Letourneau will have three Newcomer strands in place next year. He added that no one is doing a better job with second language learners than Letourneau. The data shows that they've had the most challenging students to move the needle on but they are moving the needle. He invited Mr. Martins to visit Letourneau.

Doran

Principal Bradley started by saying that Doran was a PreK-8 school serving approximately 550 students. In 2016, Doran was deemed a Level 2 school. The MCAS performance last year placed Doran in the 40th percentile and the percentile had grown by six points in the last four years. An area of growth for Doran continues to be their students with disabilities. Currently, Doran has 39 teachers. They have three special ed subseparate classrooms. They have 13 paraprofessionals that support both general ed and special ed classrooms. The significant change to the budget this year is that they are asking for a middle school social studies teacher. They have a designated science teacher who teaches 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science and they are looking to mirror that instructional model with a designated social studies teacher.

Mr. Coogan asked if that extra teacher will help to alleviate the classrooms that have 29 students. Principal Bradley clarified that this will be a separate class that students go to. The middle school ELA teachers are currently providing the social studies instruction but they're looking to add a specialist so that students can have a social studies class. Mr. Coogan asked if they could split some of the classes because 29 students is a large class size. Principal Bradley stated that it has been a challenge at Doran to merge an elementary and middle school schedule.

Mr. Martins asked if the asterisks in the budget that indicate "reducing class size" means that that is the intention or that the class size has already been reduced. Principal Bradley answered that is what the intent is for the next school year. Superintendent Malone reiterated his goal of getting the class size down to 26. That will require moving kids from one school to another.

Mr. Martins asked Principal Bradley how many paras he has. Principal Bradley answered that Doran currently has 13 paras and the majority of them are with the subseparate classrooms. There are three subseparate classrooms and each classroom has two paraprofessionals. They also have two paras in Pre-K classrooms that support special ed students and two in kindergarten and one office para.

Henry Lord

Principal Curley stated that there were no significant changes in terms of instructional programming. They are looking for an addition of an office clerk. Superintendent Malone added that they added a clerk because they are the only building without a clerk. Principal Curley continued by stating that there was an identified cost containment based on enrollment that showed one less paraprofessional in their self-contained classroom assignment for Grades 6-8 Step-Up Program for ASD.

Mr. Coogan stated that, for a new school, Henry Lord is evolving. He remarked that there were a challenging set of issues that they were facing. He is all for any support that he can give to Henry Lord.

Mrs. Panchley said that she did a quick look at the administration in the schools that they've heard from so far and the instructional leadership at Henry Lord lacked in comparison to the other schools. They have one coach and a Dean of Teaching and Learning. They have another dean but it's not an instructional dean. In comparing CPI scores, she feels that Henry Lord needs more instructional help. Mr. Martins agreed. Superintendent Malone said that all schools need extra support but questioned how he would work that into the budget. Right now, they are \$1.3 million over. He is very concerned that they are going to end up at net school spending and they're going to have to find \$1.3 million within the budget which will mean cutting positions. Mrs. Panchley said that, if the Committee was in agreement to add this to the budget, knowing that there could be cuts made, it would be fair to look at that. She'd

rather recommend adding a position that is needed and find out in May if the Mayor has the money to fund it. Superintendent Malone agreed that Henry Lord was a concern and needed additional intervention. He asked Principal Curley what additional support position Henry Lord does not currently have but needs. Principal Curley said that they have an ELA coach which will be used as an interventionist to support more students. The mathematics counterpart to that position would be something that they want to look at. When they look at their scores, there was growth, especially in ELA; however, where there was no change or a decline was in math.

Superintendent Malone explained that in bargaining and in the budget, the position that used to be an interventionist or a coach are blending. It will be one person who will help both adults and kids. They can add a math person but it will take him a day or two to figure out how they can capture that in a grant so that it does not affect the bottom line request. He also wants to make sure that this is the right position to add to the budget. Principal Curley thinks that it is. She said that currently they have people in their building who are strong in math but they're doing double time. There's a vice principal who has been a math coach but she's so tied up in SEL that she can't provide the level of math support for teachers and students. Having a dedicated math person will make a difference. Superintendent Malone said that he will add this to the operating or grant funds.

Mr. Martins asked if there were schools that were performing very well that have positions that can go to schools that are not performing as well. Superintendent Malone said that, through the budget process, the principals have had this conversation. They have moved some positions and programs around to get more equity in how they deliver services. Mr. Martins said that he agreed with extended day programs but, if they have to cut back on extended day programs to fund a school that is in greater need, that's what they have to do. Superintendent Malone reminded Mr. Martins that Watson School made the decision to eliminate their extended day in order to keep all their positions. Mr. Martins said that there could be other schools that are doing well that don't need their extended day. Superintendent Malone said that they are having those discussions. The budget that was brought forward will not require them to do that.

Stone

Principal Shaw stated that Stone was in its second year as a K-8 school. Stone supports 53 students. They have not made any significant changes in their budget. They are asking to convert an office para position to a clerk position because they run a summer school program so it's important to have that support over the summer. They are also asking for the addition of a ½ time nurse that will be shared with another school. Right now, they only have nursing services for children who need medication. Superintendent Malone said that they would be sharing a nurse with Resiliency. He asked Principal Shaw to explain what they would be bringing forward on Monday night at the School Committee meeting. Principal Shaw said that they were thinking about the possibility of making the Westall school a K-12 school for kids with therapeutic needs. What she has discovered is that kids who they send out don't necessarily maintain the progress that they made at Stone because there don't get the same therapeutic support elsewhere. They've worked very hard having kids transition back into their regular schools and those students have done very well. The kids who are still working on their therapeutic issues are not doing as well when they go to other schools. The school can only help them when they're in K-8 but she is concerned about what happens to kids when they go to the 9th grade.

Mr. Martins said that the original concept of Stone was to bring in students from other districts rather than have those districts outsource their students at a much higher cost but he doesn't think that ever happened.

Principal Shaw said that there are so many students out of district right now because there is not an appropriate program for them. If they could bring those students back, that would be a big savings to the district. Mr. Martins would like to see that but he pointed out that the resources that Stone will need will be quite high. Ms. Moy said that bringing students into the Stone School will make the district money since they will not have to outsource students to other places. They want to bring students back to their community. They lose a lot of students in 8th grade who go out of district, which is a huge cost for the district. They lost six students because they did not have the proper resources for them. Their hope and intent is to bring students back into the district for the 9-12 program. They will not only have cost savings but they will also be able to afford the staff that they need for no additional cost. They will be looking for at least four classroom teachers and four paras and a behavior therapist. Their out-of-district placements range from \$60,000-\$100,000 per student. Being able to bring some of those students back will be a nice cost savings.

Mr. Coogan suggested shifting some staff within the school to support the students. Ms. Moy said that they could do that. If special ed staff wanted to shift over, they could. The Bridge Program will need to stay where it is. They'll still need to run a subseparate social-emotional classroom at the high school. What they have found is that some of the Stone students in 8th grade have gone to the Bridge Program and that's why it hasn't been as successful because it is not at the same therapeutic level as Stone is. That's why they need to increase Stone so that students can stay there. She can look into the Bridge Program and see if there are students who would be better suited at Stone.

Mr. Coogan asked how many kids were in the Bridge Program. Ms. Moy said it was in the low 20s. Mr. Coogan asked how many kids would shift to Westall. Ms. Moy said it could be about five. It would be driven by an IEP process and what students would need per placement. Right now, these students are coded as subseparate students not an out-of-district placement. Stone School is an out-of-district placement. If they're not successful at Stone, the school department is required to send them to an out-of-district placement. These students have been designated by their previous teams as needing subseparate support. Mr. Martins said that he would support this as long as the students get what they need.

Superintendent Malone stated that on Monday night as part of the Capital/Facilities Plan, they will be bringing forward the first read of the short-term FY18 first quarter capital plan where they recommend that Stone be moved to Westall and build the K-12 programming.

Mr. Martins said that the School Committee recently received a memo from the Superintendent regarding Medicare. The district pays the cost of Medicare but when the reimbursement comes back, it doesn't go to them. Ms. Moy said that they have worked really hard to increase those numbers this year. In the SPED department, they're in charge of collecting all that data and sending that to Medicare. They've doubled their numbers this year in an effort to try to get some of that money back.

2. Budget for SPED

Ms. Moy explained that special ed was 20% of the district's population which is higher than the state average of 17%. They have about 14 autism spectrum disorder classrooms, 13 community-based classrooms, 11 social-emotional classrooms, and 29 language-based classrooms. There are a total of 67 subseparate classrooms throughout the district and a total of 1,200 students. They are currently looking for two program improvements. They are looking for a Community Faciliator, which is a bilingual para who would help the department communicate with parents. They currently do not have anyone who can translate for them. They have quite a large population of ELL students that are also special ed. They would also like a special education director. Ms. Moy is currently the Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services but the student services part has been neglected for many years due to the nature of this role and how vast it is. She currently has three supervisors under her. One is designated for the out-of-district students, of which there are 130, and all related services. Most of the services are contracted services. She is also responsible for Greene, Stone, and RPA. Another supervisor is challenged with nine elementary buildings and the early childhood center. Lastly, they have one supervisor for high school and the middle schools. They are spread thin. It's a challenge to meet day-to-day tasks. This position would be great in looking at growth for students and closing the achievement gaps.

Mrs. Panchley asked Mr. Almeida how these numbers related to last year's budget. He said that out-of-district costs were at \$8.4 million in FY16 and they're at \$9.3 million this year. When Principal Shaw mentioned the six students that left Stone, all those students went out of district and that cost \$600,000. The rest of the cost was for a couple of additional students and an increase in out-of-district cost. There has been a significant increase in the last three years. Superintendent Malone said that they will put together some analyses for the Committee. He clarified that they were requesting a special ed director that is an FRAA position. This position will be ½ funded through the special ed grant and ½ funded through the operating budget. Given the way that they are structured, they are not able to provide a level of accountability, oversight, and support for special ed that they want to because there isn't enough administrative support.

Mr. Coogan asked how many special needs students were at the high school. Principal Raposo said 19% of the students at Durfee were special needs, so about 450. Mr. Coogan said that there used to be a department head in the main office to help teachers and people. Superintendent Malone said that would be brought forward when they discuss the high school's budget. The position at the high school would be a dean. The director of special ed would be above that person. Mr. Coogan asked how often the supervisors were in the schools. Ms. Moy said that they're in the schools a lot but they're usually in meetings. They meet with principals, teachers, and psychologists weekly. They try to give more attention to the schools that are struggling so the other schools that are doing well don't get as much attention. Mr. Coogan asked if they do walkthroughs in the classrooms. Ms. Moy said that they try to get into the classrooms as often as they can. Unfortunately, they're not paying as much attention to all the classrooms because they are focusing on the classrooms that are in most need. Mr. Coogan asked Ms. Moy if she gets into any classrooms. She said not as much as she'd like to.

Mr. Martins said that he understands that IEPs are confidential but he wondered if every teacher who had a student with an IEP knew what that student needed. Ms. Moy said that teachers with students on an IEP are granted access to view the students IEP. Mr. Martins asked if principals also access this. Ms. Moy

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said that principals also have access. They also have evaluation team chairs that are spread out through the district and they share schools. They are also responsible for supporting special ed teachers if they have any questions about IEPs.

MOTION: Mr. Coogan-Mrs. Panchley: To adjourn.

No discussion

All were in favor

None were opposed

Motion passed (6:36 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,



Administrative Assistant

Documents Referred to:

- Spencer Borden Elementary School's Proposed FY18 Budget
- Fonseca Elementary School's Proposed FY18 Budget (revised)
- Letourneau Elementary School's Proposed FY18 Budget
- Doran Community School's Proposed FY18 Budget
- Henry Lord Community School's Proposed FY18 Budget
- Stone Day School's Proposed FY18 Budget
- Special Education Department's Proposed FY18 Budget

ADA Coordinator: Gary P. Howayeck, Esq.- 508.324.2650

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Administrative Assistant for the School Committee Services