

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, March 20, 2014

4:30 PM

School Administration Building

417 Rock Street

Fall River, MA 02720

AGENDA

Finance Subcommittee Workshop

- Budget for Group 2 Elementary Schools (Fonseca, Tansey, Letourneau, Silvia, Watson)

MINUTES

At 4:34 PM Mrs. Panchley, Chair of the subcommittee, read the open meeting law.

Mrs. Panchley then called to order the meeting of the Finance Subcommittee for Thursday, March 20, 2014. A roll call for attendance showed Mrs. Panchley, Mr. Costa and Mr. Hart were present.

Also present were Superintendent Mayo-Brown, Mr. Michael Saunders, Dr. Fran Roy, Ms. Ivone Medeiros, Mr. Tom Coogan, Mr. John Nunes, Mr. Kevin Almeida, Ms. Maureen Cote, Principal Raposo, Principal Bretz, Principal Facchiano, Principal Carvalho, Principal White, Mr. John Nunes, Principal Pontes, and members of the press.

Mrs. Panchley welcomed everyone to the workshop and explained the meeting was to learn a little more about school budgets, what is going on in their schools, strengths and weaknesses, and why they might be asking for changes or additions.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that they appreciate the opportunity to go before the Finance Subcommittee with a different group of principals to present their budgets based on the unique needs within each of the schools. She noted that before they began, Mr. Saunders would like to provide the Subcommittee with updated information regarding net school spending. She explained that net school spending sets an amount by the State which is considered to be the minimum amount a city/town must spend on education.

Mr. Saunders said when they started the budget process in December; they were looking at the operating budget with the transportation costs which are not eligible toward net school spending. They also looked at the medical which has a budgeted amount and an actual amount. They are running below the budgeted amount and anticipating that there will be a shortfall with that as well. They are estimating medical to be around \$500K and anticipate the combination of the two would put them short approximately \$1.5M. Once they fall below net school spending, it becomes part of their foundation budget which is next year's requirement for net school spending. If the \$1.5M was used in the projection for FY15, they would still be short of the net school spending requirement by roughly \$100. The budget that they are proposing brings their net school spending to \$128,304,000. The

budget that they propose is just short of the \$96M plus the other costs that are picked up on the city side and will put them just in the target area to meet the minimum requirement for adequate education.

Mrs. Panchley said to be clear, this budget represents what the State is saying is the minimum they can spend on education in FY15 with net school spending and the shortfall.

Mr. Saunders responded that the budget before them plus the projected costs from the city puts them just at the target of the minimum requirement, not above.

Mr. Costa asked what percentage of the \$1.5M is transportation.

Mr. Saunders said it is \$900K right now and has potential to climb above.

Mr. Costa asked if that was primarily McKinney-Vento.

Mr. Saunders said it is a combination of special education plus McKinney-Vento. He is hoping they get a claim in the area of \$1M. They can apply to the State to get that money back for the next year. They are looking at the homeless being around \$600K and are going to make sure they can claim as much as possible so that they get State funds back to the city.

Mr. Costa said that was not factored into the \$1.4M that they are looking at in additional monies to cover net school spending in 2015.

Mr. Saunders said that was correct. There is an increase in the current operating transportation that they put into the budget but how that is funded is not factored in.

Mr. Costa said if they are able to get the McKinney-Vento money back for the next year, they may want to reflect that somewhere.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that would be a reimbursement.

Mr. Costa said it would be a reimbursement but it would offset the \$1.4M they are going to ask the city for in additional money to meet net school spending in FY15.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown agreed.

Mr. Costa further explained that anyone looking at it would think that the city would have to come up with \$1.4M to meet net school spending; however, if \$600K of that is McKinney-Vento money which they can apply for and get the following year, that would reduce that \$1.4M by \$600K.

Mr. Saunders said that was correct and that the \$1.4M would not have to be funded 100% by the city.

Mr. Costa requested that they designate that somehow so that they can keep their eye on it.

There was no further discussion on this topic.

Mrs. Panchley asked Principal White to begin her presentation.

At 4:43 PM Fonseca Elementary School Principal, Teri White presented:

About the school:

- 800 students
- 9% are low income
- 91% designated as high need
- 14% special education
- 24% first language other than English
- 11% ELL
- 2 VPs, 2 SACs, 1 behaviorist, 1 nurse, 35 classroom teachers, 1 special ed. self-contained teacher, 4 special education teachers, and an ELA department head.
- Kindergarten class sizes averaging 31 with 3 paraprofessionals split between 5 classrooms
- 1st through 5th are averaging at about 27
- K-2 classes are taught by one teacher and 3-5 are departmentalized
- Low performing; had a little growth the previous year but they are not close to where they need to be

Budget:

- Requesting 2 intervention teachers to help with not only the Grades 3-5 work but also to help build foundation skills for K-2. They would work with para-educators who are assigned to that unit to help build the skills up of the K-2 students and continue the work of the 3-5 students.
- Currently she has a vacant math coach position that they have been unable to fill so she is requesting that that position be converted to a department head position to help with the supervision. This would be a math department head who would oversee teachers and paras.

Superintendent Mayo Brown explained that from a district perspective, when they compare the resources that the schools have, Fonseca is not funded at the level other elementary schools are. Also, Fonseca would be a school right on the cusp of Level 3/Level 4. They are in the 2nd percentile of all schools in the Commonwealth. They need a significant infusion of resources to accelerate the school.

Mrs. Panchley said she did notice that when looking at the school's resources.

Mr. Costa said he noticed the reduction of three Title I staff members and questioned how that happened.

Ms. White explained that she currently has an integrated Kindergarten classroom and next year that will change so the paraprofessional assigned to that classroom will go away.

Mr. Costa questioned if that paraprofessional would come off the Title I grant and go into the local budget.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown noted to Mr. Saunders that the Title I column lists -3.

There were some discrepancies in the Title I line that Mr. Costa asked Mr. Saunders to sort out so that they would know where those positions belonged.

Mr. Saunders said he would go back to them with that data.

Mr. Hart asked how Fonseca's attendance is.

Ms. White said they meet the State average but are not much better than that. They have been working on attendance. They are at 92-93% and their goal is 96-97%.

Mr. Hart asked how parent involvement is at the school.

Ms. White said they struggle with it. Their PTO has a core group that does a lot. Parents do go to watch their children (i.e. concerts, parent/teacher nights) but the school struggles with getting them to come in and volunteer. They are trying to recruit through a newly developed tutoring program.

Mrs. Panchley asked how their benchmarks have been so far.

Ms. White said they hope to meet their goals. They are up and down with every test. They are really struggling with reading which is their biggest focus.

Mrs. Panchley asked for a rough estimate of how many of their kindergarteners attended pre-school.

Ms. White said she did not know that.

Mrs. Panchley said she would be interested to know that information.

At 4:57 PM Watson Elementary School Principal, Cathy Carvalho presented:

About the school:

- Designated a Level 4 school this year so they are working to put things in place and trying to get people in the building to work with the staff and build their capacity.
- They had no students in advance for MCAS this past year and very few scored in proficient.
- Had bump in ELA (19%)
- Flat in math
- Down in science
- Goals for this year came from their turnaround plan which is aligned with the district's AIP
- They need to strengthen Tier 1 instruction/strengthening the teachers' practices in the classroom; coaches have been leading this work.
- Developed a math, ELA, and social/emotional learning committee to make sure they are working on their short-term goals; committee implemented some of the parent events; they make sure that each of their content areas are working to capacity.
- Working on RTI – Professional Development

Budget:

- Requesting for an extra interventionist. They have one that has been working with Grades 3 through 5. One of the goals in their turnaround plan is to target emerging literacy with their K-2 students so by the time they enter Grade 3, they are all readers. The interventionist would support the students who have needs based on DIBELS as well as help the staff around PD and being more knowledgeable about the things they can be doing with the students.
- There are a couple of positions that are not listed that she will look for with her Redesign Grant: student support coordinator and a full-time technology teacher to incorporate blended learning.

Ms. Carvalho also added that they became a ½ hour extended day school this year and have early release on Wednesdays so they have 1 ½ hours with staff and target PD. They will add an additional ½ hour next year and are hoping to incorporate an intervention block.

Regarding parent involvement, she had put a flyer out to parents and then put a parent in charge of contacting parents that showed interest. They have a sign-up sheet and make it very easy for parents to help out (i.e. hanging bags of work on the door so that they can come in and be useful and not have to wait for someone to give them something to do). They had over 80 families at a recent Wellness Night. It is a struggle to get parents in for things but now the parents are leading the charge and it is getting better.

They are still struggling with attendance. They have a poster displayed outside the office where students can see if they are or are not making attendance goals and are beginning to push each other.

Mr. Hart said he thought that Ms. Carvalho was the right person to move the school up from Level 4 and asked her about community partnership.

Ms. Carvalho said they have the Flint Merchant's Association that helps them with trying to get funding for field trips, etc. This year they applied to the Rotary for a couple of different things and received money for Chromebooks. They have also adopted their school and are buying shoes and socks for their students. The PTO put out a letter for donations to local merchants and they received money to purchase three additional Chromebooks as well. They had a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club that they have not been able to fit in yet but would like to work that out.

Mr. Hart asked if they were going to open it up to more grades to be able to go to the Boys and Girls Club.

Ms. Carvalho said they all went last year; every week a different grade went.

Mrs. Panchley asked about Meditech.

Ms. Carvalho said that Meditech has been a partner as well and has been wonderful with the technology piece. Last year they got a new computer lab as well as two eno boards this year.

Mr. Costa asked if she knew how much Redesign money was going to be available.

Ms. Carvalho said she did not but thought it depended on the size of the school.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they are eligible for up to \$500K per year for three years but the department has not issued guidance. Because they are a smaller school, it might be less.

Mrs. Panchley asked when they would know.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that the deadline for applying is mid-April and they would see the money come, if approved, in the summer time to provide some professional development opportunities. It would run for three years.

Mr. Costa asked if Ms. Carvalho anticipated filling the two positions she mentioned now or if she will wait.

Ms. Carvalho said she has a part-time technology teacher this year so she would make that a full-time and the student support coordinator she would wait on because they need to develop the program/job specifications.

Mr. Costa said that he knows they have been successful when focusing on Level 4 schools – although the hope is that schools do not get to that level – but he knows with the right types of interventions and support, they can turn them around. He does not think she is asking for a lot and the interventionist is a reasonable request that he can support.

Mr. Costa asked that Madame Superintendent keep the Committee up-to-date on the Redesign money.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that one of the things that she will be bringing to them this fiscal year is a request to release an RFP for a playground for the Watson who is the only elementary school that does not have a play space.

Mr. Hart thought it was a great idea and asked if they had any other ideas for the large space such as basketball hoops.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they really want to transform a space in the back. They utilize Play Works and they are limited with just having the blacktop.

Mr. Costa felt it might help encourage kids and add to their investment of what is going on there and let the students know that they are important and they want them to succeed.

Mrs. Panchley said she feels that the school is on the right track and she left with a positive feeling after her visit. She, too, did not feel that Ms. Carvalho was asking for anything excessive.

At 5:14 PM Silvia Elementary School Principal, Jean Facchiano presented:

She explained that she was new to the principalship but not to the Silvia School and that she is blessed to work with a dedicated staff.

About the school:

- 816 students
- Administrative Team: Principal, 1 VP, Dean of Teaching and Learning, 2 SACs
- 27 classroom teachers, 6 pre-school teachers, 7 special education self-contained, integrated classroom teachers, 1 ASD classroom, 4 inclusion special educators, 2 interventionists, an ESL support staff, 1 literacy coach
- Expanded Learning Time school for seven years
- Level 1
- Class sizes: Currently Kindergarten classrooms are all at 30/31 with the exception of their integrated classroom which is capped at 24; Grade 1 classrooms are all at 32; Grade 2 classrooms are all at 29. They need more “bodies” to work with the students.
- Use RTI kit from Reading Street

Budget:

- Requesting the transfer of a literacy coach position to a Dean of Student Supports and Operations.
- Requesting the transfer of funding from a math coach position to a math intervention specialist.
- Requesting the addition of 2 paraprofessionals to help reduce the adult to student ratio in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

Ms. Facchiano explained that they currently have a vacant math coach position and the Dean of Teaching and Learning fills in for that work. A lot of the job description of a coach is currently being done by the Dean so they feel they do not need a literacy coach. Their Assistant Principal is a math specialist and has taken on the instruction part of that because they lacked a math coach all year. Instead of getting a math coach, they would like to transfer that to a math intervention specialist to work more directly with students. They currently have two interventionists and the data is really good. She added that they focus solely on the lower grades to get them while they are young and not have to “Band-Aid” the top. She went over some of their data. She noted that 47% of their students leaving 2nd grade are not at level so their goal is to have that math specialist interventionist target 2nd grade and going into 3rd.

Ms. Facchiano handed out another Goal (4) for science that was not included in the binder. She explained they did not make their CPI in science so they have differentiated their PD to target Grades 3 through 5 in science.

Mrs. Panchley asked if they still have a partnership with the Boston Museum of Science.

Mrs. Facchiano said there was.

Mrs. Panchley said that some of the names of the requests may be a little different than what they have been hearing; however, she knows from first-hand experience that the administration is strong on the academic side so they can support that and that maybe some of the supports are needed in different areas than at other schools.

Mrs. Facchiano said that she and the Assistant Principal are the instructional leaders and provide the PD and tap into their experts in the building. They need the Dean of Student Supports to alleviate some of the work that they are consumed with and to work closely with the SACs to help the social/emotional piece as well.

At 5:23 PM Tansey Elementary School Principal, Dr. Nicholas Bretz presented:

About the school:

- K-5
- 321 students
- Administrative Team: Principal, Assistant Principal, 1 SAC
- 2 coaches (ELA/Math), 14 regular education teacher and 1 social/emotional behavioral room, 2 special education teachers, 1 inclusion special education teacher, 1 reading interventionist, shared art & music teachers (Watson), 1 FT physical education teacher, and 1 technology instructor.
- Focus on curriculum and planning; instructional expectations and ongoing feedback and support to faculty and staff.
- Level 3 and working on changing that

- Small school concept
- Very strong PTO
- Offer parents things they can do to help support academics at home; Push teachers in Standard 3 (community support); teachers are focusing on offering seminars to parents
- Elective offerings twice a year (fall/spring) that students are able to choose from.

Dr. Bretz noted that he is really proud of the school's efforts as they transition with leadership. They have supported one another and they are tightening up their Tier 1 instruction and Tier 3 supports. Their benchmarks seem to be consistent with last year. They have embedded checkpoints as well. He said that the composite goes home to parents as well as any notes and goals that he has discussed with the students.

Mrs. Panchley thanked him for that and said she had requested that for years.

Dr. Bretz said he has offered an MCAS seminar for parents as well. He then went over the school's targets. He noted that he is working closely with his math and ELA coaches who he feels have great perspectives in the classroom. He is targeting what the coaching is looking like and has moved to modeling between the teachers and coaches. They have daily unannounced walk-throughs with feedback as well.

He added that they have a strong newly developed Instructional Leadership Team which includes a majority of the staff as well as administrators.

Budget:

- They are not asking for anything additional. Dr. Bretz feels they need to be creative and focus on their Tier 1 piece with the current staffing.

Mr. Costa asked if they were asking for two additional paraprofessionals at some point.

Dr. Bretz said that at one point he was looking at that but given his current numbers, he is not anticipating that they would need them. He is a little worried about the class enrollments going into Grades 2 because his Grades 1 are at 32. He is being cautious but received an additional paraprofessional at the start of the school year for K-1 that he may transition or use for help in Grade 2.

Mr. Hart asked about the unannounced observations.

Dr. Bretz said they are done by himself or the assistant principal. They had originally gone in to do them together. They are unannounced to give targeted feedback. They look at the lesson plans first and compare that to what they are seeing in the classroom. The unannounced is very brief (10-20 minutes). He gave examples of what they look for and feedback given.

There was further discussion regarding modeling.

Mr. Hart asked about the baseball field and if there was funding to rehab it. He understands that it may be a long shot but worth looking into.

Dr. Bretz said the Boy Scouts came in over the summer and cleared out the nature area and made it a preserve walk.

At 5:39 PM Letourneau Elementary School Principal, Brian Raposo presented:

Mr. Raposo thanked the staff at the Letourneau. He is a new principal there and they have accepted him and work hard to provide the students with a high quality education.

About the school:

- 655 students
- Level 3 functioning in the 2nd percentile
- 40 teachers
- 3 unit school with their general education classrooms
- ESL Program School with 1 unit of classrooms K-5
- 4 classrooms of students with autism spectrum disorder that are sub separate rooms and work with 1 teacher and 2 paraprofessionals.
- 179 ELL students which changes weekly (27% of population)
- 34% primary language other than English
- 82% low income
- 16% special education
- SUP was 39 in ELA and 48 in math
- 92% scored needs improvement or warning in science
- All subgroups did not meet their targets in PPI
- ELL are most academically fragile (PPI 43/aggregate 57)
- Departmentalized Grades 3-5; have ELA and math department heads who work to facilitate PD; working on teacher leaders
- Departmentalization has allowed teachers to focus on content areas; departmentalized horizontally and vertically
- Developing a comprehensive RTI approach
- Very high percentage of students requiring Tier 1 and 2 support; his approach is that they focus on Tier 1 instruction so that as that is strengthened, they will see less kids requiring Tier 2 and 3
- 1 ELA and 1 math interventionist who work with K-5 depending on where the need is, based on data; targeted
- PLC weekly
- Comprehensive wellness program: 2 full-time SACs, nurse, attendance office; the VP chairs the wellness team
- They have seen an increase in positive behavior; referrals down
- SACs using RTI to create interventions as well

Budget:

- Requesting 2 bilingual ESL newcomer paraprofessionals who can facilitate small group instruction under the guidance of teachers; concerned about the number of newcomers in the classroom with 3rd grade currently having 26 newcomers with one teacher and 1st grade with 24 newcomers. Mr. Raposo added that this group also tends to be transient with gaps in education/academically behind so he feels they need the additional support.

Mrs. Panchley noted that they are not only 26 newcomers in a class with one teacher but that the students within the class may not all speak the same language.

Mr. Raposo said they definitely do not speak the same language.

Mr. Hart asked about the transience and if they are there a year or two years before leaving.

Mr. Raposo said it can be within the year or from year to year. They are working around parent education. Some move within the year and then come back a couple of months later. He can get them mobility data from year to year but they also have within the year transience as well.

Mr. Costa said there is certainly a need for the resources Mr. Raposo is asking for and it is unfair to have that many students in a classroom speaking multiple languages with learning gaps. He added that to the extent that the Committee can advocate for the resources requested by principals, they will.

Mrs. Panchley thanked Mr. Raposo and asked if someone would be able to provide data as to how many students attended pre-school and look at the data by school.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that they know that 50% of students across the district have pre-school experiences. She said they can provide a report out by school for students who have had pre-K experience. She added that the data can also show those who have had experience and those who have not and what their attendance looks like through grade 3 as well as scores.

There were no further comments or questions. Mrs. Panchley thanked everyone for being there and presenting.

MOTION: Mr. Costa – Mr. Hart: To adjourn.

All were in favor

None Opposed

Meeting adjourned at 5:50PM

Respectfully submitted,



Interim Administrative Assistant for
School Committee Services

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