

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

**Thursday, April 10, 2014
4:30 PM**

**School Administration Building
417 Rock Street
Fall River, MA 02720**

AGENDA

Finance Subcommittee Workshop

- Durfee and RPS

MINUTES

At 4:36 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, April 10, 2014. A roll call for attendance showed Mrs. Panchley and Mr. Costa were present. Mr. Hart was absent.

Also present were Superintendent Mayo-Brown, Mr. Michael Saunders, Dr. Fran Roy, Ms. Ivone Medeiros, Mr. John Nunes, Mr. Kevin Almeida, Ms. Maureen Cote, Ms. Jocelyn LeMaire, Mr. Tom Coogan, Principal Vinacco and Principal Marshall. Mrs. Panchley asked that the record show that School Committeeman, Joseph Martins, was also joining them.

Mrs. Panchley explained that they would be hearing from Durfee High School and Resiliency Preparatory School to discuss their budgets and that they are the last of the schools to present. She feels the process has been helpful to them as they are putting the budget together.

Durfee High School Principal, Paul Marshall presented:

He noted that their Program of Studies was accepted and that the course requests for Durfee students were complete. The incoming freshmen requests would be done Monday and he will be meeting with department heads on Tuesday to look at the tallies and discuss staffing. They will go back to the School Committee once that process is done to discuss any shifts in staffing.

About the school:

- Implemented Freshman Academy which changed their proximity/has them in one area of the building; increased the time on learning in math and ELA; all freshman teachers were trained in guided discipline. He has also looked at a Restorative Justice program which he is hoping to have trainers in to do that work as well.
- Implemented an advisory program which was one of the NEASC recommendations. He feels it has been fair at best and took a lot of time to get up and running with lessons learned; they struggled with how to replicate it for grades 10 through 12. Their concern is ratios and time.

- Anticipate the need for another ELL teacher with the possibility of them being in a lead teacher role. Trends show the ELL population will continue to grow and he feels they should start building capacity.
- He and Principal Vinacco have discussed what type of students are going over to RPS and they feel that has changed a little bit. They want to make sure the right kids are in the right places for the right reasons. They discussed having a Credit Recovery Program at Durfee with the student starting their day later and the teacher's schedule shifting in accordance with the contract. Right now they have the homebound tutoring program. A number of the students are taught at Durfee or one-on-one out in the community but they found that this is a more economical way to do it and also a way where the students are still attached to the school. The idea is that these students will start their day later and it would be more of a recovery program. It would also open up more resources and spots at RPS where the "truer" alternative school students would be able to attend. He asked department chairs to identify teachers who would be willing to do that.

Mrs. Panchley asked if it was something he was looking to do for September.

Principal Marshall said it was. It falls within the contract and is just the shifting from the morning to the afternoon. There are a number of teachers interested in this scheduling due to day care issues, etc.

Principal Marshall noted that he felt they put a very strong application in to the Department of Labor but he was informed that they did not get the grant so they are scrambling to try to find some resources to be able to do this program. He added that they do have some money from the Career Academy grant to be able to do some training but their hope was that the Department of Labor grant was going to slingshot them forward. He said they have had excellent conversations with BCC and UMass Dartmouth and through the grant process have been able to make some very good contacts with both schools. Both are very interested in growing their collaborations.

Mr. Costa asked how many RPS referrals had been sent this year.

Principal Marshall said he did not have that number but could get it for him.

Mr. Costa also asked for the total that was sent last year as well.

Mr. Martins said that he is disappointed that 50% of the schools recognize CPI and 50% do not and believes that if you do not recognize CPI as a goal then you are admitting you will not meet your targets and he finds that disturbing. He can more vigorously argue for a budget if he knew that all of the schools and central administration uses CPI as their target.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown explained for the record that PPI includes both CPI and student growth. CPI is 80% of PPI and the remaining 20% is student growth. If a principal references PPI, CPI is inclusive in that measure.

Mr. Martins asked why CPI targets were not illustrated.

Principal Marshall said that the targets for Durfee were in there.

Mr. Martins responded that in the written goals, about ½ of the schools did not acknowledge it.

Mr. Costa said you cannot achieve PPI if you do not achieve CPI.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that was correct and that the best way to think about CPI is straight performance and the other 20% is to acknowledge that schools are improving. She added that you always want to look at performance and the school's ability to improve otherwise you sit still if you just look at performance.

Mr. Martins said he sees it as the PPI is 20% of the CPI

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that was incorrect. Every school has to hit a target of 75 for PPI so if you are not meeting your CPI, you are not going to hit that State target.

Mrs. Panchley asked if Durfee has a math department head.

Principal Marshall said they do not currently.

Mrs. Panchley questioned that it did not look like he was requesting an increase.

Principal Marshall said if they look at it, it is still on the books this year but is just not a filled position. He added that is also the case with the ELA department head.

Mrs. Panchley asked if he planned on filling them and Mr. Marshall said they do.

Mrs. Panchley asked if there were tracks in the electives in Freshman Academy or if students could pick from the different areas.

Principal Marshall explained that students can take a World Language, PLTW, Art or Music track and if they do not fit under one of those categories, they can go through Durfee Discovery which offers a "taste" of different things. It also encompasses the school's CTE programs which they try to bundle into focus areas. Students are able to take two of those focus areas during the year. He added that they are required by Chapter 74 to have that program/ability to do that. At the end of the year, the students are ranked and can apply into the program.

Mrs. Panchley questioned if they are receiving extra Chapter 74 funds to have it set up that way instead of letting a student pick one class in one Discovery program and one class from another.

Principal Marshall said the other thing is that a lot of freshmen come in thinking they know what they want and they are introduced to something they didn't think of.

Mrs. Panchley said the feedback she has heard from parents was that their children wanted to take a few different classes but couldn't because they had to go into one track area and that there were programs within those areas that they did not want to take.

Principal Marshall said they have done a lot of variations of Durfee Discovery and refined it to the current model and can look to refine it further.

Mr. Costa asked if the credit for the biomedical classes went back retro to the beginning of the year.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown and Principal Marshall both said it did.

Mr. Costa asked if the calculations have been done.

Principal Marshall said those calculations are not done until the end of the year.

Mr. Costa asked if that had effect on their ranking or current GPA because he knows a student in that situation and thinks they may have been precluded from National Honor Society.

Principal Marshall said if that is the case, they can take a look at that.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they need to take a look at that because they do not want anyone to be precluded.

Mr. Martins asked what the status was of advancing any of the programs to Career Pathways/Chapter 74.

Principal Marshall said the Instructional Subcommittee instructed them to do the leg work of what that would entail. He just received some information back on TV/Communications and they are waiting for a time to go back to the subcommittee.

Mr. Martins said he feels there are a few programs that can fall under that program with the right scheduling but it can be discussed further at the next Instructional Subcommittee meeting.

Mrs. Panchley noted that they had met or exceeded their CPI targets. She added that Principal Marshall is not asking for any additional positions and asked if he felt they could keep status quo with their current staffing.

Principal Marshall said yes.

At 5:04 PM, Resiliency Preparatory School Principal, Jessica Vinacco presented:

She explained that she was going to walk them through their School Improvement goals as a lens for their budget narrative.

1. Goal One: CPI targets. She noted that there are some categories that RPS does not have enough data or marks in yet for them to get their total PPI so using CPI makes more sense for them. They are trying to focus on increasing performance and proficiency. They are trying to help teacher needs by getting them differentiated PD opportunities.
2. Goal Two: Absenteeism
3. Goal Three: Dropout rate

Principal Vinacco explained that they are trying to build relationships with at risk youth and feel that is really where they can make a difference and have them buy back into the school process. They have a lot of systems in place that the district has been instrumental in such as RTI. She feels they still need to be thoughtful about providing support to their teachers, in particular math and science. She noted that their enrollment is on an ongoing basis and can look very different from month to month. The background knowledge in those two content areas is critical especially when you have students coming in with gaps.

BUDGET: They are not asking for new positions but are asking for a conversion from a guidance counselor to a math department head. The overall goal for that position would be to also oversee

science and come up with a STEM focus. She also thought it could be a shared resource they could use with Credit Recovery as well as the middle school.

CPI targets: They had some nice gains in ELA but were flat in math and science. She is concerned as the targets start to increase that their data is not there yet. She sees that need in skill sets for the teachers; PD and offering them more opportunities to get the tools they need so that the scores continue to climb.

Mrs. Panchley said she sees that they exceeded all 2013 targets and asked if Principal Vinacco felt that the jumps were not big enough.

Principal Vinacco said that they just made their target and have been flat. She also noted that Algebra I is looked at nationwide as a drop-out risk factor.

Mrs. Panchley said she was so impressed the day she went there with the learning that was going on but unfortunately there were not a lot of students in the seats. The key to her is that middle target so if they could get them into school, there is no doubt they could be successful.

Mr. Costa asked what their enrollment is.

Principal Vinacco said they currently have 208 combined (120 day) active students. They have seen 278 students this year including Gateway to College and Credit Recovery. She added that last year they saw more Credit Recovery than day students.

Mr. Costa asked if she had totals from last year or projections for next year.

Principal Vinacco said she did not and explained that it is hard to project.

Mr. Costa questioned if they are not using the RPS model efficiently this year. He and the Superintendent had a discussion earlier in the year about opening up seats and he was unsure if that had happened. He also asked if they are assessing students at the high school and transitioning them to RPS.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they have had a number of internal conversations because the early referrals to RPS tended to be students that they would classify as “hall wanderers” and were not engaged at Durfee for some reason versus the population at RPS which are heavily involved with the judicial system or gang related activity. They started to see students come in from Durfee who were not at that level of involvement which was causing some issues.

Mr. Costa said that was his concern because if they had wanderers at the high school, they have to figure out how to engage them or get them out.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she sees that as a “plugged in” issue at the high school and Principal Marshall has discussed that this year questioning how they can redesign what is occurring in Durfee to meet those needs so that they are not making two populations at RPS. They are trying to get much clearer with the high school staff with what the profile of a RPS student looks like and if they do not fit that profile, see what can be done at Durfee to be sure that student is successful.

Mr. Costa questioned if the RPS model that they have designed is no longer conducive to their needs, should they change that model. He added that they still need to stick to the fundamentals of the

program but if they are not servicing enough students in that model then they need to look at it. He does not feel that it should go back to the high school and that they have to look at it both ways.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she didn't think it was a prevention to go to RPS but being really clear about the profile of the student at RPS. She says it is back at the high school because of the amount of resources. If they are talking about a third alternative program; that could be a conversation they can continue to have.

Mr. Costa said he is going by the attendance and if there are open seats at RPS and they have students wandering at the high school, he would prefer to fill those seats at RPS than have RPS continue to run with empty seats.

Principal Vinacco explained that a lot of the referrals that come from Durfee are from kids that are truant. She added that it is not just about the number but also the quality of the service. If their classes were to get bigger, the quality of the services they offer would be impacted because there would be fewer resources.

Mr. Costa responded that as he is advocating for resources in tough budgets, he has to justify it.

Principal Vinacco said that she has to justify her dropout rate as well if the quality of service dips.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that she believed what Principal Marshall is trying to do when he spoke of the Credit Recovery piece is to get at the students who don't need to go to RPS but do need a different model. The Credit Recovery model is successful at RPS and they would like to replicate it at Durfee.

Mr. Costa said that may be a way to capture some of those students. He understands and has supported the RPS philosophy but does not want to see them sticking so closely to it that they are excluding students who could benefit from the program as well but cannot because they do not fit the mold 100%. He fears they will lose students at the high school before seeing if they can fit at RPS.

Principal Vinacco said there is a lot of flexibility.

Principal Marshall said that they constantly collaborate on what those students look like and where they will have the best chance of being successful. Both staffs have been working to break that down by looking at the data, the students, and trying to identify the students. He believes that the flexibility is there. He said there are also people who feel there should be more alternatives and he does not disagree and thinks they need to take a look at their programs at the high school to see if they can adjust to the different students that are coming in. He equated it to the RTI model. He also added that he believes having a Credit Recovery program at the high school would be a great benefit to the kids at the school and will also add clarity to what is going on at RPS. He feels all doors should be closed before moving on to an alternative and that they need to get creative in taking a look at how they respond to different students. He agreed with Mr. Costa and thinks that the Committee has been clear that they would love to provide more resources but they have what they have and are charged with trying to make that work and have been successful for the most part.

Mr. Costa responded that from where he sits, he has to look at it from the educational/practical standpoint. If numbers are dropping, they may need to take a look at how they can expand the program to stick to what their true values are and he thinks that takes some flexibility. He wants to make sure they are maximizing the opportunities that they have and utilize the resources at RPS.

Mrs. Panchley said her take on it was different in that if the Credit Recovery moves over to Durfee, she thinks some of the resources should follow.

Principal Marshall responded that if they looked at the history of RPS and Durfee that is really the way that it has worked. The teachers that went to RPS were Durfee teachers (from the former Durfee Academy program) and he does not believe additional teachers were added.

Mr. Costa said he just wants to make sure they are utilizing the resources that they have more effectively which is why he requested the enrollment.

Principal Vinacco said she thinks they would be surprised to see that they have gotten bigger over the past few years.

Mr. Martins said students wander corridors because they are not interested in the materials that are being discussed or don't see relevance to it. He noted that they did not receive the large grant but if they read the grant dialogue, it was clear that the intent was to have programs that were career pathway oriented. The idea of the program is to allow students to select something that they are interested in and have a prescribed course of studies. He explained that those programs aren't for everyone but unless they have these programs, they will continue to have wanderers and high absenteeism because of the lack of relevance.

Mrs. Panchley said she felt like they were getting away from the budget discussion and asked if Mr. Martins had any questions for Principal Vinacco.

Mr. Martins said when he looked at the 2013 MCAS results, there was quite a bit of insufficient enrollment to warrant a grade which he didn't understand.

Principal Vinacco explained that the state pulls the information as of October 1st. The students that count are the students who are with them from that date until the MCAS testing. After October 1st they enroll more students. She explained that they just had ELA MCAS and had almost 60 students and of those students, they are only being counted for about 15-20 students.

Mr. Martins said he understands the October 1st report but asked on the day of the testing, how many students they had in grade 10 ELA.

Principal Vinacco responded that they had about 55.

Mr. Martins said he is not sure if that was one of them that had insufficient students but he was questioning it as he was reading the reports.

Mrs. Panchley responded that what Principal Vinacco is saying is that they don't count 55; they only count the ones that were there on October 1st.

Principal Marshall added that only sophomores are tested.

Principal Vinacco said that was correct; of their 200 students, they have 45 sophomores in the day school and another 20-30 in credit recovery that are coded as sophomores.

Mr. Costa added if they do not go off of a set date of enrollment, they get double counted.

Mrs. Panchley added that they may also not want to hold a school accountable for a student they only had for two months.

Principal Vinacco said that they still take the test at RPS and come up on their roster but they do not count for their score.

Mr. Martins asked if they count for Durfee.

Principal Marshall and Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they do count for Durfee.

Mrs. Panchley added that is not a district policy that is the State who determines that.

Principal Marshall explained that the State does not report on a school unless they have a minimum number of testers.

Mr. Martins said he will bring it up at the next curriculum meeting.

There were no further questions for Principal Vinacco or Principal Marshall.

Mrs. Panchley said that there was an addendum that did not pertain to them and that both Principals were welcome to leave.

1. School Resource Officers (SRO).

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that this came up when they met with the city's finance team on Monday. The School Committee had voted in December to sign off on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on an additional 10 officers that would be used in and around schools. That MOU is silent about what that means for indirect costs. They wanted to revisit this with the Committee to gain an understanding from them as to whether or not when they approved the MOU; there was any understanding of what the financial impact would be in indirect costs and what guidance they would like to offer as to how they include the additional SROs in the FY15 budget.

Mrs. Panchley said she was not on the Committee at the time but her concern after reading was that if they had agreed that \$700K of indirect costs would go toward net school spending (NSS), then that would put them in a worse situation than what they might be heading towards and questioned what it would mean for their academic services.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that Mr. Saunders ran the numbers for the subcommittee and also ran a couple of scenarios for them but there is also an adjustment to the health insurance based on their projections. She noted that they were waiting to hear from the city for their projections regarding the health care so that they can reconcile their numbers. She acknowledged that Mr. Nunes was present and representing the city.

Mr. Nunes said that they are working on the medical projections.

Mr. Martins asked if they are reimbursing the police department for the SROs.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown explained that the School Committee had agreed to fund 3 SROs in the operating budget and 2 are counted against indirect costs.

Mr. Martins said this was one of the issues he has had some difficulty over. The cost of operating the school is the operating budget plus the municipality contributions. No matter what side it is on, it is part of the NSS issue. The city is being reimbursed the cost because it is being put on to the school department total budget and now these additional 10 coming in, he would see the same way. Whether on the operating budget or municipality contribution, he likes to look at it combined. When it starts to be one versus the other, each side tends to lose track.

Mrs. Panchley said she wishes it had been discussed and Mr. Martins is right whether it is direct or indirect costs, it is taking away from academic services. The SROs may be needed but perhaps not 10 if they already have 5. She said as a private citizen, she thought the addition of 10 was great but now that she understands the process, it is not what she thought it was when she read it in the paper in December.

Mr. Costa said if you tell all the private citizens who felt the way she did, that they are not going to have the 10 officers, they will start to receive complaints. He continued that he knew it was going to come with an expense but not \$700K. He said his question has always been and will continue to be "are they going to be in our schools all the time and if they are going to be in and around, unfortunately, the city cannot charge them of for when they are around the schools; they can only charge for when they are providing a service to the schools." He said they need to first look at that and if they are going to be on shift yet answering calls or stopping in as they have in the past, then they need to look at what percentage of time they are spending in the schools.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said the MOU specifically states, "handling requests for calls for service in and around the schools."

Mr. Costa said then they need to look at what that shift is going to look like. He added that any time those officers are in the schools, they are entitled to charge the district indirectly. He does not know what that number will look like or if the \$700K is all of the cost or a percentage of the cost.

Mr. Saunders said the \$700K would be all the cost for the 10 officers. The other complications were that of the 10 officers, 5 were supported through grants.

Mr. Costa said it was a matching grant, the Massachusetts Cops grant and the City of Fall River. FRPS said they would fund 5 and the grant would fund 5.

Mr. Saunders said for the indirect to work, it has to be expenses inside their operating budget. The 5 that are covered under the grant cannot be used for indirect costs.

Mr. Costa said that was correct so that would reduce the \$700K exposure.

Mrs. Panchley asked "the grant cannot count as indirect?"

Mr. Saunders said as long as the grants are active, they cannot double dip.

Mr. Costa said that was correct; they cannot get credit for a contribution they are getting from a grant. He added that 5 could be used as indirect. He thought that the fairest way to do it - if the MOU states "in and around schools" - is to see what percentage of those 5 will be in the schools and look at what percentage of those salaries would then be charged as indirect. He added that he wants schools to be safe but he also wants to be sure that they are not being charged through indirects for salaries or benefits that aren't being provided to students.

Mrs. Panchley said that number would be much more palpable.

Mr. Martins said that the MOU needs to qualify what “in” and “around” the school means. He added that they have to take steps to continue having protection in the schools based on the society that we live in and felt they have to pay for it.

Mrs. Panchley said since there had not been a conversation on how this was going to be paid for, she thought it was important to bring it up at this meeting so that it could be worked out.

Mr. Costa said he thought there was a clause or provision in the indirect costs agreement that if there is any expense that is in dispute, the Superintendent would get together with the City Administrator to determine.

Mrs. Panchley said at the meeting they had, the City Administrator was saying “in or around” and thought she may have felt the same way they did so she did not think there was any argument but that it needs to be discussed and moved forward.

MOTION: Mr. Costa – Mr. Martins: To refer the discussion on School Resource Officers MOU and the total cost of indirect to the full committee.

2 were in favor

1 was absent (Mr. Hart)

Motion Passed

2. Employee Health Care Projections

Mrs. Panchley explained that the health care projections were discussed at Monday’s meeting and also at finance subcommittees. The projections look like it will be less than budgeted which is part of the FY14 shortfall that they are looking at in planning for the FY15 budget.

Mr. Saunders said the projections (HANDOUT) were shared with the city on Monday and was done in graph form so that they can show the downward trend in medical expenses. When they do their NSS estimate, they put a place holder in for an increase in medical costs. It was 7% when he did the budget books. He went over the updates which included SROs, tuition reimbursements, transportation, and medical. He noted that they are estimating at \$1.5M-\$2.4M in medical coverage to be conservative, and are only applying \$960K right now. They are still building in a FY15 6% increase and taking ½ of the projected savings. They are still waiting to hear back from the city with their projections so they are being extremely conservative. He said that based on those projections, their target for NSS for FY14 is \$122,984,522 which everyone agrees with. He has listed the eligible city expenses that come to \$36,686,000 which is done by estimates and where they are at currently. The next number is what would be needed on the school side to get to NSS. They have a \$91M budget with \$6.8M charged in transportation. They come up with a number short of the \$86M they needed. Based on the new numbers, the gap for FY14 is \$2M.

Mr. Costa said that is why he was trying to get the conversation going at the last Committee meeting. He said if they don’t get together, the number would grow to \$2M and now they are over \$2M. He was trying to get what the city’s projections are and does not understand why it is so difficult to get that from them.

Mr. Costa then asked Mr. Nunes what the city’s projection was.

Mr. Nunes said he did not have that information because he did not know they would be discussing it.

Mr. Costa said this is a conversation that has been going on for some time now.

Mr. Nunes said he doesn't have that number off the top of his head and wants to make sure he doesn't misquote. He told the Superintendent earlier that they are checking their numbers.

Mr. Costa asked if he had been in contact with Ms. Viveiros because there were emails that have gone back and forth. The one he is looking at says that Mr. Gupta would have the information no later than today. He does not understand why it is such a mystery and why the conversation continues to go on. He added that someone has to know what the projected cost for health insurance is because it is part of the budget process.

Mr. Nunes said he does not have that number off the top of his head.

Mr. Costa said someone on the financial team has to have that number.

Mr. Nunes said he has it back at the office.

Mr. Costa said this was a discussion that took place on Monday at a meeting that was called by the city financial team and members of the school's financial team went to. A discussion regarding medical was had and the school department gave their projections. Later, at an open meeting, Mr. Saunders said he hadn't received them yet. He noted that it was now Thursday and they were still trying to figure it out. They need to know what it is so that they can reconcile their projections so that they can determine what the difference is going to be in the city's ability to meet NSS. He noted again that the city administrator said on Tuesday that they would have the number by this meeting and they have not received an answer.

Mrs. Panchley said it is frustrating.

Mr. Costa agreed and said it is not just an issue that affects the school department finances but also the overall city finances and until they can reconcile their numbers, they are never going to have a firm handle on what the gap is in NSS which has huge implications because if they don't meet it this year, they have to meet it next year.

Mrs. Panchley said that when she was on the DOE's website, it was noted that as budgeted for FY14, Fall River is the tenth worst out of 320 districts for percentage of NSS and that was with a 101% budget. They are going to be in the (approximate) 98% NSS range and she did not know where that will rank but it is extremely concerning to her.

Mr. Martins said they will be at 98.3%.

Mrs. Panchley explained that if the number goes up, the percentage will go down.

Mr. Martins said that between the city and the school department, if the object is to meet NSS flat, then any reduction in the municipality expenditures in education has to be offset in the school spending otherwise they have to determine what is going to be the total budget for education. It is one budget (school/municipality) and not two separate budgets fighting each other. Any decrease, has to have a corresponding increase.

Mrs. Panchley did not think there was more to say. They are waiting on the numbers and when they get them...

Mr. Saunders interjected that he just wanted to explain the other three columns and went over the scenarios. He noted that the \$96M budget that they are recommending is still below NSS and they are still projecting an increase in the percentage of the medical costs.

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

3 were in favor

1 was absent (Mr. Hart)

Meeting adjourned at 6:01PM

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.