

Special Meeting of the Budget Sub-Committee (Committee of the Whole)
Budget Retreat
Tuesday, January 14, 2020
CRLS Attles Room

Called for 6:00 pm in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing the FY 20-21 Initial Budget and Enrollment Projections.

Members Present: Mayor Siddiqui, Ms. Bowman, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Rojas, Ms. Rachel, Ms. Wilson

Also Present: Superintendent Salim, Dr. Turk, Ms. Spinner, Ms. MacDonald, Dr. Madeira, Ms Washington, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Weinstein, Mr. Monahan

Mr. Fantini in the Chair. A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and read the call of the meeting.

Mr. Fantini turned the meeting over to Superintendent Salim who gave a few comments about the Budget Presentation tonight. We are looking at ways to be more transparent about how funds are allocated in the budget. Superintendent Salim turned the meeting over to Ms. Spinner, who thanked Ms. Bowman and Mr. Fantini for bringing this up last year. She explained that she will be using the FY20 (current year) CPS Budget. There is a glossary of terms and definitions in the distributed notebooks (on file in the School Committee office). The total Budget is \$215.2M, which equals \$29,478 spent per student. The funds come from different sources; the General Fund is \$201.8M, the School Meals Revolving Funds is \$2.4 M and Federal and Other Grants \$11M for a total \$215.2M Budget. The majority 83% comes from City of Cambridge property taxes, 10% comes from state aid, 6% comes from Grants, and 1% from other. CPS spends 79% of the budget on staff salaries & benefits, 7% is used for out of district tuition, 5% is for transportation, 3% is for facilities & energy, 3% is for instructional supplies and services, 3% is for other supplies & services and 1% is used for technology.

Ms. Spinner continued 68% (\$146.0M) of our spending is in schools. We use a system wide tiered approach for determining allocations to schools. She reviewed the three Tiers; Tier 1 is a base level and is the same for all schools; Tier 2 is enrollment based, the number of students determine these allocations; and Tier 3 the needs of the students determine these allocations.

The Office of Student Services budget is \$23.6M. 26% of all CPS employees support SPED programs and services, including special educators and other staff. Some schools have substantially separate classrooms.

The Curriculum & Instructional Support budget equals \$8.9M. The next highest portion of the budget is Operations which makes up \$26.3M. Central Administration is \$10.4M for district leadership, human resources, legal, financial operations.

The School Nurses, School Crossing Guards and School Resource Officers are budgeted in the City's Operating Budget. The City Budget also covers school playground maintenance and reconstruction and the Dept. of Human Services Program provides a robust set of out-of-school time programs that benefit Cambridge youth.

Ms. Spinner offered to give the new Members a more detailed explanation if they call her. Mr. Fantini advised the New Members to take advantage of this.

Ms. Wilson asked if security includes the School Resource Officers. Ms. Spinner answered the School Resource Officers are funded by the City. The security office in the high school are members of our staff. In the Transportation Department some busses are not directed by us. New this year, the City Council appropriated funds for all students that qualify for free/reduced lunch to get MBTA passes. Last year they funded free breakfast for all students.

Ms. Rachel thanked Ms. Spinner for the clear Presentation. Ms. Spinner explained we have a fairly small athletic revolving fund where proceeds come from game admission and are expended on the Athletic Dept. We have a small First Steps Daycare Center at the high school originally created for students, however we do not a lot of students having babies so mostly the teachers use it. The cost is fully funded by the teachers.

Ms. Rachel asked about Paraprofessionals in Tier 3. Ms. Spinner replied there are some Paraprofessionals in K-5 classrooms. All Kindergarten classrooms have a Paraprofessional. Grades 1-5 have a Paraprofessional if there are 44 or 45 kids in two classrooms. The majority of Paraprofessional's are allocated to Kindergarten and SEI classrooms. Ms. Rachel stated that the Tobin Montessori Program has two adults in every room. Ms. Spinner explained the Montessori Program Model design; they house three different age groups so they have a Paraprofessional. Ms. Rachel asked how many elementary classrooms have a Paraprofessional and how many are solo teachers? Ms. Spinner can't remember exactly in Gr. 1-5 we have about 4 depending on the size of the school and we leave it to the school to determine how to support those teachers.

Ms. Spinner continued switching to the upcoming Proposed Budget. There is a real focus on the General Fund which is 94% of our Operating Budget. It is supported by the City's revenue allocation. Salaries and benefits make up 82% of the General Fund Budget. We project cost by current staff analysis, enrollment based increases, cost of operational and other contracts equals the cost of maintaining the current service levels.

We are projecting an increase in Salary, Cola and Step Increases between \$4.7M and \$5M. Today the cost is \$6.2M with the increase it will cost \$6.7M to run the schools.

We anticipate a facilities maintenance increase of \$0.3M-\$0.4M, Energy Utilities savings of \$0.2M, and a Technology increase of \$0.2-\$0.3M, for a total increase of \$0.3 -\$0.5M.

Our big increases will be in our transportation providers Eastern Bus and SP&R. We are out to bid right now for the Regular Ed. Contract and putting together a bid for SP&R. For FY20 our Budget includes \$10.0M for transportation. We are still gathering information over the next several weeks. Mr. Fantini stated that these figures are very high. The last time we only had one company bid on the bus contract. Ms. Spinner replied only one bidder showed up for a preliminary bid meeting (our current transportation company). Mr. Fantini wants to know who the bid is going to before it is awarded.

Mayor Siddiqui inquired how many homeless and foster care students do we have. Ms. Spinner replied there are not a lot of students but single cars pick up one student and is very costly. The regulations state that the students can only travel for one hour in a car. We do cost share with other communities. I need to dig a little more and will answer in the Weekly.

Mr. Rojas asked what is the General Fund Budget compared to the entire Budget. Ms. Spinner answered the City Manager is putting together the City Budget so we are aligning and focusing on this a lot so we work with the city to get the correct revenue to support our Budget. When we put out the Budget it will have some grants from the state and federal government. We won't have that actual amount until July when the Title 1, Title 2a, Title 3 and Circuit Breaker Grants come in so we will be projecting it. That will come to the School Committee when we get it.

Ms. Spinner continued with Part 3 Enrollment Growth Projections. Our current enrollment is 7,236 students and we are projecting 7,561 students for SY2024-25 an increase of 325 students.

Mr. Fantini opened the floor for questions. There were none.

Superintendent Salim asked Vice Chair's Bowman and Mr. Fantini to give an overview of how the Budget is developed. Ms. Bowman thanked Ms. Spinner for the Presentation and added that other districts have goals. We used the District Plan for what we want to see as priorities over a three year time period. We

are at the end of that process and you will have input and guidance for over the next three years. We are committed to the District Wide Plan of equity and eliminating bias. The District Framework is directly tied to academic outcomes and to position students to be able to have more opportunities. We need to look at our outcomes, where we did do well over the past three years. The projected growth is a significant amount of money but are we getting the results that we want. What does that mean for our Tiered System?

Mr. Fantini asked how do we calculate the State Aid. Ms. Spinner replied we are just gearing up for our conversation with the City about our Budget. About 10% of our Budget comes from State Aid. The Student Opportunity Act funds will be coming into that for additional funds.

Ms. Wilson asked about kids being able to read by grade three; there is some increase but not great numbers, how can we be sure we are allocating enough resources so all of our kids are reading by 3rd grade.

Ms. Bowman added that she attended the MASC training last Saturday and will share information with the Committee so they can see how those numbers fall in the Budget formula. Mr. Fantini wants our college success rate to be a goal.

Mr. Rojas stated we are focusing on the General Fund what are the areas that we need to convince the City to increase funding? Ms. Spinner answered the way the City Charter works is we get a lump sum from the City; there are no line items or how we spend the money. The transportation costs we talked about is so the City Manager is aware of our needs. We have 30 less students going to out-of-district placements than in 2013. Mr. Rojas added when you show an increase of 5% is that the number you are hoping it to be? Ms. Spinner answered yes that is what we are projecting. The Manager will ask if there are any areas that we can reduce to support the additional costs. Mr. Fantini remarked over the last two years, we have increased over 100 positions so the City has been good to us. Our good faith relationship with the City Manager is very strong.

Ms. Rachel thinks it is very wise that the Budget is framed in the District Plan. Looking at the outcomes, there are some clear areas for us to improve. How do these fit together? Superintendent Salim answered we are in year 3 and will gather data of the outcomes to be sure we are pivoting around our seven measurable outcomes. The idea around equity and racial equity should be more explicit in the District Plan and bolster a clearer alignment between the definitions of equity and racial equity. Ms. Bowman wants to include outcomes in the context of the District Plan because it has not been in the past. I think it is a good thing and it is not about attacking administration. We need to figure out, are those levers giving us the results we want – it is not what we want. What do we do from a Budget perspective to make investments to achieve the goals of the District Framework? Mayor Siddiqui agrees and the City Council wants to support your efforts. The last few Budget votes were not always to pass the Budget but they need to be aware of all the important work that is being done at the School Committee level. Ms. Bowman asked the Superintendent we know we are going into a review of the District Wide Plan Framework, particularly with racial equity work, how difficult would it be to change the Tier System? Do you see a way for us to plant seeds for a Budget change, is that feasible? Superintendent Salim responded there are opportunities; part of it is the public having a clear picture. Making a major decision like every school having an Assistant Principal is not in this budget. We are fortunate to have small schools and that adds to the costs across the district. The District Plan is about how our staff is working with each other. People agree with our 5 objectives. There won't be a shift around social emotional learning. We think about it programmatically. I share the idea of a multi-year approach and what comes next. How does the Budget align with that vision and way of thinking about resource allocation differently?

Ms. Wilson stated we have six Social Workers across all elementary schools, has one for each school been discussed? Ms. Spinner responded as we do the budget we look at how it has worked and if we want to make additional investments in that area.

January 14, 2020 Budget Retreat

Motion by Ms. Bowman seconded by Ms. Rachel to enter Executive Session, on the following roll call vote it was voted to enter Executive Session at 7:25 P.M. Ms. Rachel (YEA), Ms. Bowman (YEA), Mr. Fantini (YEA), Ms. Wilson (YEA), Mayor Siddiqui (YEA), Mr. Rojas (YEA).

The Meeting reconvened in open session at 8:38 PM and a on a voice vote the meeting adjourned at 8:39 P.M.

Attest:

Terry Gist,
Interim Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Documents on file in the School Committee Office:

- Budget and Enrollment Presentation