

Cambridge School Committee
(Official Report)
Budget Retreat
Thursday, February 06, 2020 @ 6:00 P.M.
Henrietta Attles Room

Called for the purpose of an update on the FY20-21 Budget Development.

Members Present: Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Chair Bowman (ABSENT), Mr. Fantini, Ms. Rachel, Mr. Rojas, Ms. Wilson, Mr. Weinstein (ABSENT)

Also Present: Superintendent Salim, Ms. MacFarlane, Mr. Maloney, Dr. Madera, Ms. Spinner, Mr. Smith, Ms. Phillips, Ms. Hamilton

A quorum of the School Committee being present Mr. Fantini called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and read the call of the meeting then turned the meeting over to Superintendent Salim. Dr. Salim reviewed the budget process timeline and priorities that have been mentioned by the Principals, Department Heads and the Community.

Dr. Salim stated two areas that have been reported at the forums are co-teaching and Level Up. He received some questions from the news media around the revenue side of the budget because there has been some miscommunication around what was shared at the end of January about the maintenance budget when we shared projected revenues and expenses with the School Committee. My proposed budget will prioritize those initiatives and include Racial Equity and Equity. Dr. Salim turned the meeting over to Ms. Spinner.

Ms. Spinner shared that we put our focus on the Equity Driven District Plan, Aligning Resources and District Outcome Measures. We are a well resourced district. When thinking about our budget it is not about adding more resources it is making sure we are using our resources in the best way possible. We have had meetings with administrators to review the timeline & process and see if there is any need for additional funds for district priorities. The budget staff meets with each department & school to review line items in their budgets and staff allocations for the upcoming year related to current service levels to focus on the district plan.

Ms. Spinner reviewed the Community meetings take-aways aligned with the District Plan Objectives; Objective 1: Equity and Access, Level Up, ELA and History. Teacher diversity and that we may be expanding the paraprofessional to teacher pipeline, supports for school leadership to advance racial equity issues within school communities. Review curriculum tools through deeper equity and a cultural responsive lens, and exploring expansion to full school day in Special Start.

Objective 2: Engaged Learning: this is the first year that we had Elementary Math Interventionists. Upper Schools have an enhanced math curriculum and math interventionists. Early Identification and supports for struggling readers across general education and special education; Curriculum Review and Implementation. Co-teaching is essential.

Objective #3 Whole Child: Social Emotional Learning & Behavioral Health and Positive Student Centered School Culture. Our focus is to improve both Tier 1 preventative and Tier 2 interventionists; restorative justice and peer mediation, build time in schedules and fostering trust and relationships.

Objective 4: Family & Community Partnerships: Enhanced family engagement, Summer Programming and Out-of School Time Opportunities.

Objective 5: Implementation and Continuous Improvement: Implement system for evaluating, improve capacity to analyze impact of student and family participation and technical support for schools to use time and staff more effectively through strategic scheduling.

Ms. Rachel asked about enhanced math and math interventionists in the Upper Schools where it says it has improved and do we have any outcomes? Dr. Turk answered we have a combination of school level surveys to get information directly from the students and by direct contact and conversations.

Ms. Wilson asked about the Level Up practices, are we looking at any of the best practices coming out of Level Up? Thinking about class sizes and how to manage that with the co-teaching style? Dr. Turk responded we will have an opportunity to go deeper into Level Up later tonight with Principal Smith and Ms. Phillips. Yes, we are looking at best practices and there continues to be teachers and administrators, going out to other schools and learning practices and lessons learned. There is also time to discuss their work.

Ms. Wilson asked about the teacher diversity and bringing in out of school time providers and the pipeline to teaching. Dr. Salim responded that is something we can explore but we have focused on the Paraprofessionals because they are in the schools and connecting to objective 4 and the models that exist in our schools and strong relationships with staff.

Ms. Wilson inquired are we being intentional with staff and young people, are we going to have the young people at the table and making sure their voice is heard. The Becoming a Man (BAM) Program is fantastic at the high school. How can we support the girls, can there be a partnership with Women of Wisdom (WOW). Ms. Spinner responded the WOW Program is not available to us.

Ms. Wilson asked who are we targeting for summer programming, is it our most vulnerable students? Dr. Salim responded all young people. Research has shown that summer learning loss is across the country. Ms. Wilson inquired how can we remove barriers so programs are accessible for families to participate in an innovative way. Dr. Salim answered this summer we had an Early Literacy Program and community schools camp like program experiences. The Upper School partnered with Youth Centers. We will also look at lunches and transportation as we learn where the barriers are so we can align supports.

Mayor Siddiqui asked for clarity about supports for struggling readers and professional development interventionists who is it for? Dr. Salim answered it is for our general educators as well because they can identify the students first. We're also thinking about this for our general educators to engage in. We are partnering with MGH about instructional needs for students with different needs. Mayor Siddiqui asked about the Paraprofessional pipeline can we possibly include our CPS students. Dr. Salim responded the city is talking to the Cambridge Community Foundation about a precollege program. As I learn more I will share.

Mr. Rojas stated at the meeting with the teachers I heard that the schools need more psychologists and the mental health crisis how has it been discussed? Dr. Salim answered the Tier 1 piece for when students and families are in crisis and having the supports for them. We have invested at the Kennedy/Longfellow this year. We are working with the OSS team and what practices have shifted to respond and provide wrap around support. Not everything we shared tonight has resource implications but what we are doing in terms of our practice. At the elementary level kids are coming to school with more trauma and it is happening across the Commonwealth.

Mr. Fantini asked what happens with the meeting with dept. heads; do they present their goals and expectations or just state what they want for the next year? Ms. Spinner replied not during the budget hearings, we ask them to share their accomplishments and goals in their Budget narratives. Mr. Fantini inquired do they make sure that all kids apply for the FAFSA? Ms. Spinner does not meet with the guidance department only with Principal Smith. Mr. Fantini asked how do we make sure that the kids that need summer programming are there. Should the Superintendent send a letter to invite them? Dr. Salim answered we are hoping to remove some of those barriers and work with families with challenges. Mr. Fantini has heard the King Open model is good why not use it for other schools? What has been the impact of the investment we made in instructional coaches and interventionist's?

Mayor Siddiqui asked if the Lesley Compass Program still exists and the MIT Summit Program. Supt. Salim responded yes Compass still exists and last summer we had a Summit Program for 1st and 2nd

grade risers that we coupled with full day and transportation. Mayor Siddiqui inquired what was the follow up. Superintendent Salim answered we just got the information and will be sharing it with the Committee.

Mr. Fantini wants to address vocational education because for the last ten years we have not sent any one to the Solved Collaborative; that needs to be addressed.

Superintendent Salim stated that Dr. Morgan will review Part 2: Co-teaching Overview & Level Up Update. Dr. Morgan gave a quick overview of what co-teaching is. She reviewed 5 myths about co-teaching, described what co-teaching is and the role of the general and special educator. Next she explained the six co-teaching approaches. There are six models; one teach one observe; station teaching; partial teaching; alternative teaching; teaming and one teach one assist model.

Dr. Morgan continued Collaborative Planning/Collaborative Teaching. She went on explaining progression to supporting diverse learners: traditional classroom structure, current and future classroom structure (we call collaborative teaching). She then reviewed CPS strategic approach to strengthen collaborative planning. Common planning time is very important and the six approaches are complex. It is a multi-year approach. Dr. Morgan explained the types of service delivery models; consultation, in-class general education support, services outside of the general education classroom and a sub-separate setting. We have stipends for after school workshops but they need it integrated in their day. Finally she reviewed some considerations for effective collaborative planning/teaching.

Mr. Rojas asked if co-teaching is directed toward students on an IEP. Dr. Morgan explained co-teaching is a general education and a special education teacher in a classroom as a special delivery option to a student on an IEP. Ms. Phillips added lots of students benefit from these models. Lots of small groups interact with their teacher.

Ms. Rachel asked about framing and our philosophy it sounded like you may be advocating for co-teaching. Dr. Morgan responded at CPS co-teaching is not the only model we use. There are different ways to leverage different types of learners. UDL is a different model within the environment, instruction and materials. It could be to provide more time or have visuals it depends how the brain learns. Ms. Rachel asked is UDL Tier 1 and co-teaching as Tier 2? Ms. Phillips thinks of co-teaching as Tier 3 a way to provide specially designed instruction in a general education setting. The IEP is for the student to get individual services.

Mr. Fantini inquired how is it decided what classes get co-teachers? Is it the students that drive the model? Dr. Morgan yes, but almost every math classroom in the Upper Schools have two people in the classroom. Mr. Fantini asked once we start a co-teaching model does it stay a co-teaching classroom. Ms. Phillips answered we collaborate as a team for the next year and map the students and we decide how many people are going to be in a class.

Ms. Wilson asked about planning time for sped teachers to sit with general education teachers and hearing there is not enough time in the day. How do we decide if it is happening with the restrictions we have? Dr. Morgan answered we did a scheduling audit last year of the elementary schools. We want to make sure all schools have more support to do this. We are having more intentional meetings with curriculum and instruction. We look at goals and where students are showing signs of struggling and we have inclusion and sub-separate classrooms.

Mr. Rojas asked where in the continuum does collaborative teaching fall. Dr. Morgan answered the collaborative model is more strategic, grade level, integrating support of specialists and instruction is given with a higher level of expertise. We have experts come in to give professional development to all teachers. Mayor Siddiqui said you mentioned stipends, do you have any idea how much it is? Dr. Morgan answered the stipend is based on the CEA contract.

Dr. Turk gave a brief history of the Level Up Program to better understand where we are today. The high school has been talking about this since August of 1999 when we got a new Principal that did not end well. Part of the reason is because there was not an opportunity for planning. In SY15-16 the teachers at

CRLS moved beyond conversation and showed energy for thinking how to help students be successful and that all students have the potential to go even further. A researcher, Lorraine Munroe, said what is good for the best is good for the rest. People started thinking about what is the best so all students fit into that category. In SY16-17 we had another Principal that did work around leveling the ground for students. How do we make sure that we are ensuring our students all experience high quality professional learning, high expectations with high support and measure & monitor progress to learn from our mistakes as well as where we were doing well with the students. That brings us to the Level Up Programs Goals and Timeline. In SY17-18 we started with grade 9 ELA, in SY18-19 grades 9 & 10 ELA and 9th grade history and finally in year 3 SY19-20 the 9th, 10th and 11th grade ELA and 9th & 10th grade history.

Principal Smith stated we traveled to Illinois and built strong teams. We are a work in progress. The freshmen enter Level Up and our goals are to strengthen the entry to CRLS, support a rigorous, joyful, culturally responsive experience; we had to shift mindsets and beliefs and promote equity for all. We had to believe that all young people can learn. We now have more rigorous curriculum for all students, consistency across classrooms and learning community's common assessments to monitor academic progress, greater demographic diversity, and stronger connection between the ELA/History curriculum. Teachers who have experienced both models express interest, happiness, fewer behavior referrals and the number of students in AP has increased each year.

Ms. Phillips reviewed structural changes at CRLS to support Level Up. We have high expectations with high support. We use full and split block co-teaching models. It is not Level Up for all. It is for substantially separate classes and ESL classes. It is Level Up for most but other students are getting what they need too.

Ms. Rachel asked about the seminar and how it is working this year? Do students feel like that is tracking? Ms. Hamilton responded the focus is on social emotional learning and getting kids into school and have a place to go through seminar. It has decreased this year. Student's have a place to ask questions and get support and have a break in the day because it is exhausting having two honors level classes because before they weren't challenged in honors classes. The group is getting along and now they have another teacher in the room. It is a different structure but the kids are not stigmatized. Ms. Phillips added the first year there was a lot of bias and now it is not how your previous teacher felt about you as a student.

Ms. Rachel asked how many of the Level Up teachers are seeing the same cohort of students. Ms. Hamilton answered the 9th grade is the full year so all kids are in a cohort with the same teacher and can work collaboratively. The whole team has time together to work on curriculum. Ms. Rachel asked how is it decided which sections have full teams and which have none. Ms. Phillips answered it depends on the IEP's and we want to make sure the students get the electives they want. Prior to Level Up our classes were unequal. We balance all demographics across all the levels. We schedule the special ed students first and fill in around them.

Mr. Rojas asked why not have co-teaching in all the sections? Ms. Desiree answered that was a tough decision when I realized we were providing a higher level of service in 9th grade English and History because over supporting kids can be a detriment too and it leads to poor outcomes over time. We had to make decisions about not requiring a co-teacher in the classroom. Some kids have disabilities but don't need extra help. Some kids have accommodations in their IEP plan. We need to be strategic with our resources and what is best for our students as they move forward. The Level Up teacher team has been problem solving. It doesn't always have to be just another adult in the room but staff working differently.

Ms. Wilson stated the number of students have increased I am also looking at dual enrollment. What does that look like? Ms. Hamilton responded that all 10th graders take the Bunker Hill assessment. If they meet the criteria we offer a writing 101 class after school and sponsor scholarships based on 1st family member to go to college and on free/reduced lunch. Some kids go to the college to take classes. Ms. Rachel wants to know what budget you need for all kids to have dual enrollment.

Mayor Siddiqui agrees she wants to know the cost. I want to confirm what the challenges are regarding scheduling, staffing and teacher fatigue – how does that translate to the child. Ms. Hamilton replied the teachers are teaching full year and see the kids every other day. It's different when you teach the 10th or 11th grade because you will see 60-70 kids. We're looking at different ways to schedule next year. Last year teachers taught six sections this year they teach five sections and next year we are looking at four sections. It makes it difficult to create equity for teacher case load. We brought in RSTA to have more electives so we can partner up and have consistency for teachers. We have three Tiers now and sections that are not co-taught at all. It's not perfect compared to where we were three years ago. We need to figure out how to get another educator to facilitate things in the class. I would love you to be in the classroom and see for yourself.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Rojas, seconded by Ms. Wilson, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Gist
Interim Executive Secretary to the School Committee