



Budget Workshop
April 28, 2020

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
(Official Minutes)

Called for 6:00 P.M. A virtual special meeting, for the purpose of a budget workshop to discuss potential adjustments to the FY 21 Proposed Budget.

Members Present: Mayor Siddiqui, Vice-Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, Member Rojas, Member Weistein, Member Rachel, Member Wilson.

Also Present: Superintendent Kenneth Salim, Dr. Carolyn Turk, Claire Spinner, James Maloney, Maureen MacFalane, Barbara Allen, Lindsay Rinkus, Dr. Alexis Morgan, Dr. Michelle Madera, Steve Smith

Student School Committee representatives present: Sophie Green, Hersh Kanner,

A quorum of the School Committee being present, Mayor Siddiqui called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and read the call of the meeting. She also read that the Open Meeting Law that has been approved for remote participation.

- Roll Call vote was taken to start the meeting:

Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Chair Bowman, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Rojas, Mr. David Weinstein, Ms. Rachel, Ms. Wilson

Mayor Siddiqui introduced Superintendent Salim to speak on the powerpoint presentation regarding the proposed adjustment to the FY21 Budget.

- [Budget Workshop Presentation.4.28.20](#)

Meeting commences with comments and questions by the members for Superintendent Salim.

Member Wilson thanked Supt. Salim for his presentation and expressed the following.

Noting that additional social workers at the high school level and having more social workers in our schools is critical especially for those kids who may or may not have IEP's and may not be able to be serviced by the current social workers.

The Social Workers that we have who do fantastic jobs but clearly have large caseloads. We know that our young people have been going through a lot with their social emotional, mental well being at the high school level, it's really critical that we have more social workers in that setting to really support and address and just be available for our kids.

Member Wilson requested a breakdown of the allocations of the 240K discretionary funds.

- **Superintendent Salim** expressed a deep commitment to the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, stating that in addition to the allocated funding there would be grant support and federal funding. Explaining that \$240,000 is part of general funds that are discretionary. In addition, grant funds that support the range of scope of this office, including \$80,000, and \$100,000 from mental health grants. The total of that is about \$420,000.

Member Wilson -followed up with wanting to have a clearer breakdown of the funding and what additional funds and resources would look like. Adding that a strong emphasis must be done to do more, because our children of color are the ones who end up suffering.

- **Superintendent Salim** -Answered that resources and the budget are certainly one element of this work, it's also critical how we are doing the work and how we're engaging in it. I think that is very systematic, that was the premise around this office of providing greater coherence across this work, we could put all the dollars into a single office that we want, but if that is not done in a in a way where we're all moving towards the same goal, the success of our students, particularly students from historically marginalized backgrounds, then we're not going to be successful. This view is also part of a theory of change, that we need to do this in a thoughtful, collaborative way that is coherent for the system.

Member Weinstein started his portion by thanking the Superintendent on the presentation along with the memo outlining the powerpoint.

His comments and questions were specific to the funding of the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, echoing some of the concerns brought up by Member Wilson.

He would like a delineated version of the funding for the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, and followed up with - can there be monies added to the funding? As well as echoing the calls of support for the educators of color coalition, the equity fellows participants and build equity bridges on others.

Member Weinstein went on to discuss that in our district, racial equity work, which means monetary compensation for participants and for teachers that may include release time, job share arrangement and or stipend funding for professional development.

- **Superintendent Salim** answered that we're actually looking to launch this year. And that commitment will signal that we are in a place moving forward. And so it's not about just waiting for the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging to make decisions around discretionary dollars, but it is about having some, some opportunity about really having a collaborative process to figure out what's the right scope, And what we want to invest in at the front end of this work, recognize it is not going to be, a one year initiative. This is not a five year initiative.

Member Rojas began his remarks by thanking the Superintendent for his presentation as well as the City for committing to maintain the current funding of the FY21 budget.

Questions 1. What is the impact on the FY21/22 budget relating to COVID 19? Would you consider prioritizing some of your key hires in phases, with some of the other hires in a later budget?

- **Superintendent Salim** -there will be significant funds coming from the federal government in terms of the cares act, and it's not entirely clear what exactly they will look like but I think that we are hoping that those resources will offset any areas where the city may be experiencing less revenue from, the economic impact of COVID-19. A delay in hiring affects the applicant pool for a school department.

Member Rojas remarked that considering potential impacts and having to make tough decisions or maybe potentially firing people that we've hired because of the budget changes that may be coming down the line.

Questions 2. Where is the money going to come from regarding the impacts of COVID 19 and its recovery plan - its collateral expenses? With remote learning, social distancing in the classrooms, summer programming, early start to the school year to think about.

- **Superintendent Salim** expressed that there is ongoing dialogue with the City Manager regarding possible scenarios as well as unanticipated needs yet -there is still so much unknown. City Manager DePasquale is both apprised and supportive of the potential need.

Member Rojas requests the Superintendent give him a breakdown of the amount of money going for discretionary funds to be used for the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. In addition, have the requests include a table showing the current funding that's available plus the new funding that is being proposed.

- **Superintendent Salim** explains that there is a breakdown in the PowerPoint - slide 22.

Member Weinstein Notes that currently we have existing policies, that talk about staff and community involvement in decision making for the Office EIB, it would be good to reference those policies with respect to the structures and supports that are going to be now available for community and decision making of the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Member Rachel States that she would like to know more about the resources for creating, building and sustaining that now.

- **Superintendent Salim** answered that it's both a combination of existing budget dollars in the FY20 budget and the current year, knowing individually foundation funding, where we're looking at opportunities to be able to provide resources to step in- a working group to be able to design and launch a family caregiver coalition. And also to think about the piece of just the staffing supporting the development of the job description and the process around the chief equity officer.

Member Rachel Wanted to know what resources are available to do that work already? And was concerned that this is not a budget that brings the community and schools together to close opportunity gaps.

Superintendent Salim believes that this budget has the resources to do this work well.

Member Rachel stated that she still has concerns regarding the budget and its funding of the EIB

- **Superintendent Salim** responded that he believes that this budget and its commitments enable us to continue that engagement. CPSD will launch some initiatives in the coming months.

Member Fantini thanked the Superintendent for his presentation and asked if the Superintendent has met with equity leadership - talking to the building equity, Educator of Color Coalition?

- **Superintendent Salim** Yes, over the last several weeks he has had opportunities to connect twice with the educators of color coalition groups and also with a group of parents and educators of color that have been connected to EIB work in different ways.

Member Fantini expresses support for the Superintendent and his commitment to equity and racial justice. In addition he would like to see equity audits done, It will inform the

district where our best investments of money will be. He also stresses the importance of a budget voted on in the affirmative.

Vice Chair Bowman stressed how important it was to go forward with the FY21 Budget and have accountability throughout the district. Noting the difficulties that the district and the country are facing during the pandemic. Ending with acknowledging that there is give and take of the process.

Member Green Thanks the Superintendent for the presentation. Goes on to discuss the merits of the addition of the social workers positions and what are the prospects of social workers positions in the lower grades.

- **Superintendent Salim** Explains the background of the position and breaks it down by schools.

Member Green Speaks about the importance of the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, and agrees with having a central office and then putting out a cohesive plan for everyone. Would like to see an office at the High School. Reminded the Superintendent the importance of the student groups.

Member Kanner Asked where the Social Workers would be working? And was wondering about the ways that these social emotional support measures will be implemented in the school.

- **Superintendent Salim** That determination is still in the beginning stages. Emotional Support will be part of a school improvement plan, of which it is a priority that exists in every school improvement plan in the district.

Member Kanner concurred with what Vice Chair Bowman said about making sure there is accountability.

Mayor Siddiqui Thanked the committee members for their thoughts about everything that they're sharing about the budget and as it relates to the equity office.

Expressed the importance of Covid 19 Recovery Plan, a more detailed learning plan and went on to explain the reasons why this is so critical for the budget and future budgets.

- **Superintendent Salim** Explained we are facing a crisis that no one has had experience and they are looking at the big picture around the recovery plan. There needs to be more collaboration with the stakeholders and with a cabinet leadership team.

Mayor Siddiqui went on to state that she understands that it's been a hard and challenging time for educators and administration. She is concerned for the preparedness and who will be impacted by it, and inconsistency across schools.

Vice Chair Bowman asked for clarity regarding this current Summer funding and FY21 - specifically talking about planning for this summer in the context of passing this budget, or leveraging the resources that we currently have in the current budget to tackle these issues.

- **Superintendent Salim** the FY21 is an 18 month plan. To focus on the return this summer and returning fall as being a way of addressing learning loss that we might be seeing among many students. That, of course, means that then there's a shortened 20, 21, 22 school year. And by necessity also have to think about the following summer.

An element of the plan is something we can certainly work on sharing with the committee, but just wanted to be very clear around sort of where we are, what challenges we face as we do think about both the present and As well as what we have ahead.

Member Fantini Expresses that he has questions regarding remote learning. Suggests public hearings and input maybe a choice.

- **Superintendent Salim** preliminary plan around having forums, community forums can ask questions, based on the school level.

Member Rojas Discusses how important the COVID-19 recovery plan is and also appreciates the conversations around the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and appreciates the conversations about accountability. Discusses the possibility of the delayed vote.

Mayor Siddiqui The committee hearing is Tuesday, May 26. The school committee is supposed to present its budget on June 3.

- **Superintendent Salim** Breakdowns the forums of the hearings and regular meetings Stating that a week delay is something that could be accommodated into the schedule.

Vice Chair Bowman expresses, if there is a possibility of more resources and the needs are validated by future conversations, the City Manager would be open to those discussions.

Mayor Siddiqui - Thanks to the Committee and Administration for their comments and commentary and discussion. Will be working with the Superintendent on the budget process and future meetings.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Rojas seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call vote, the meeting adjourned at 8:01 P.M. Mayor Siddiqui (YEA), Ms. Bowman (YEA), Mr. Fantini (YEA), Mr. Rojas (YEA), Mr. David Weinstein (YEA), Ms. Rachel (YEA), Ms. Wilson (YEA).

Next meeting scheduled will be a virtual Regular meeting on Tuesday, May 5th, 2020, 6PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Dever Wood
Executive Secretary to the School Committee (temporary)