



## PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL OFFICE  
27 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE  
TERRYVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06786

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

### PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION

#### REGULAR MEETING

VIRTUAL MEETING - AUDIO ONLY

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021

7:00 P.M.

#### MINUTES

PLYMOUTH, CT  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
2021 JAN 20 PM 2:17  
*Erica Calbiya*  
TOWN CLERK

**Present:** Mr. Seaman, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Foote, Mr. Elsaghir, Mrs. Kremmel and Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

**Also Present:** Mrs. Turner, Interim Superintendent, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Aronheim, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services, Mr. Tencza, Business Manager and Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology

1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mr. Seaman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

**MOTION:** To entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:** To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 9, 2020

Motion Mr. Foote, seconded Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, Mrs. Lucian abstains motion passes.

PHONE: (860) 314-4783 | FAX: (860) 314-2766 | [plymouth.k12.ct.us](http://plymouth.k12.ct.us)

*Plymouth Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider.*

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 6, 2021. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, motion passes.

4. **Presentations**

- 2021 – 2022 Superintendent’s Proposed Budget Presentation to the Board of Education

Highlights

1. Superintendent’s Letter

- Proposed Budget for 2021 – 2022 - \$25,403,551 which is an increase of 2.53% over last year’s budget. It supports the reconfiguration of our elementary schools with a budget neutral impact. The reconfiguration will provide opportunities to target instruction at the PK-2 and 3-5 levels and will increase academic achievement moving forward. This budget also maintains pre-COVID staffing levels.
- Current operating Budget – Plymouth Public Schools has been awarded nearly \$390,000.00 in CARES Act funding, which was used to fund additional staffing positions and to purchase COVID related supplies. In the proposed 2021 – 2022 operating budget, we have no indication that we will be receiving additional funds to offset COVID related expenses. Since March of 2020, our students have fallen behind and without the funding requested in this budget, the gap will continue to grow.
- Proposed Budget Reflects
  - (a) Resources necessary to provide high quality instruction;
  - (b) Supports the social and emotional development of our students;
  - (c) Enhances opportunities for rich, educational experiences; and
  - (d) Respects the needs of our students and citizens of Plymouth.

2. Review of District Accomplishments During The Pandemic

3. Budget Development Schedule

4. Budget Development Style

- (a) Zero-based Budgeting– a technique whereby each budget item must be justified from scratch or zero for all existing and newly requested programs. This process is conducted each fiscal year compared to budgetary decisions being based on previous year’s funding level.
- (b) Priority Based Budgeting – designed to match available resources with school priorities and provide information to elected officials that lead to better informed decisions, meaningfully engage citizens in the budgeting process.

5. Challenges

- (a) Uncertainty of COVID 19 impact for 2021 – 2022.
- (b) Making up the lost learning opportunities for our students.
- (c) Meeting the social/emotional needs of our students.
- (d) Uncertainty regarding grant funding.
- (e) Implementing the elementary school restructure plan with a budget neutral impact.
- (f) Meeting the goals set by the Board of Education while adjusting to meet the current economic realities of school funding.

6. Budget History (2009 – 10 thru 2020 – 2021)
  - (a) 1 year below 0%
  - (b) 3 years at 0%
  - (c) 3 years below 1%
  - (d) 5 years between 1% & 2.2%

Annual average is .97%
7. Town of Plymouth 2020 – 2021 Operating Budget - \$41,913,913.00
8. Board of Education 2020 – 2021 Budget Funding - \$24,775,559.00
9. Superintendent's Proposed Budget
  - (a) \$25,403,551 (2.53%)
    - Aligns with and meets federal, state, and local mandates.
    - Reorganizes the elementary schools (PCS PK – 2 and FES 3 – 5) with a budget neutral impact.
    - Continued emphasis on student safety and wellbeing.
    - Maintains existing levels of educational services
    - Allows for inherent variability in Special Education Funding.
10. Overall Budget Request Change
 

• 2020 – 2021 Budget	\$24,775.559
• 2022 – 2022 Budget	\$25,403,551
• Difference	\$ 627,992
• % Increase	2.53%
11. New Staffing Requests (Districtwide)
  - 0.6 Social Worker (District-Wide)
  - 1.0 Custodian (50% at PCS/50% at THS)
  - 0.5 THS Hall Monitor
  - Custodian and Hall Monitor were previously funded through CARES Act.
12. Chart indicating “How Does Our Spending Compare?”
13. 2021 – 2022 Superintendent's Proposed Budget
 

• Electricity/Gas Oil	2.27%
• Transportation	7.55%
• Health Insurance/Benefits	17.24%
• Interscholastic Sports	0.94%
• Outplacements/Tuition	6.04%
• Everything Else	7.02%
• Salaries	58.94%
14. Summary of Cuts
  - 4.31% Budget (\$25,842,363)
  - \$1,066,804
  - \* Requested by teachers and administrators
  - \* Teachers and administrators were very conservative and mindful of current economic conditions.

- 2.53% Budget (\$25,403,551)  
+\$627,992  
\* Maintains the existing programs and does not impact staffing. Includes restructure of elementary schools and maintains support structure for students after nearly one year of modified learning.

Impacts of the Budget Reductions to Achieve 2.53% Budget Increase

- \* Reductions in every department
  - \* \$442,017 in cost reductions after initial budget requests
    - \* 10% Supply line reductions across the board
    - \* \$47k in Technology cuts
    - \* \$150k in Special Education Services
    - \* \$173k in Salaries
    - \* 0% increase in facilities/maintenance
    - \* \$53k in additional operating line items
- No Additional costs for restructure of the elementary schools
- \$386k in COVID 19 relief grants not renewed by 2021 – 2022


15. District Enrollment/Plymouth, CT Historical Enrollment by Grade

16. Plymouth, CT Projected Enrollment – Enrollment Projections by Grade

17. Cost Drivers – Budget Categories that have increased

• Technology	20.0%	\$102,136
• Special Education Services	3.9%	\$222,573
• Benefits	3.3%	\$140,148
• Salaries	2.2%	\$294,408

18. Outside Tuition & Transportation - \$587,259,000

- Tuition Budget \$194,109.00 (22%) 
- Transportation Budget - \$393,150.00 (3%)
  - \* Vo Ag Student Tuition
    - \* Cost per Student is \$6,823
    - \* 27 current students
- Students to other schools (Magnet/Tech/Charters)
  - \* 153 current students
- 180 Students are selecting to learn outside Plymouth Public Schools

Summary

- A 4.3% (+\$1,066,431.00) budget was requested by teachers and administrators during the budget development process.
- A critical review of the budget requests by Administration resulted in \$442,417.00 in budget reductions.
- It is estimated that to maintain the existing service levels offered without impacting staff levels and services to students, a 2.53% (\$627,992) budget is required.
- Anything lower than 2.53% will significantly impact our ability to effectively provide quality learning following a difficult and challenging year due to the pandemic.

For a more detailed presentation of the Superintendent's Budget Presentation, please visit our website at <http://plymouth.k12.ct.us>.

Mr. Seaman – To Mrs. Turner – Thank you for your Budget Presentation to the Board. This appears to be a very reasonable budget considering what you have had to face this school year. Thank you both to yourself and Matt for all the work you both have done.

On a personal note: To Mrs. Turner – Thank you for being here when the town, school district and the Board needed you. When Dr. Semmel left, you stepped up to the plate, indicating you would take this position for a year. What a year you have had thus far. All the work you have done with COVID, contract tracing, keeping staff motivated and moving forward, I would like to personally thank you for that.

First Budget Workshop Meeting: Wednesday, January 20, 2021. Please review the budget presentation that was provided to you and make notes to bring with you to the meeting.

## 5. **Superintendent's Update**

### Highlights

- \* Lottery for Pre-School opens on February 12. Parents of Pre-K students soon will be receiving information. Make certain to re-enroll your child.
- \* Kindergarten Registration to follow.
- \* Any student with an IEP and all of our 504 students (PreK-8) have been invited to attend 4 days a week during hybrid. A similar plan is being worked on for high school students.
- \* Reopening – Mrs. Turner indicated she is in contact on a weekly basis with the of Health Department and the State Department of Education. The State is concerned that the new strain of COVID-19 may be at its worse in the month of March. Therefore, we continue to monitor the situation.

### Recommendation

Terryville High School remain in hybrid as we continue to struggle with the lack of space and are unable to cohort our students at the high school.

PreK – 8 – Resume in person learning on February 1. Students will be coming to school 4 days per week with Wednesday a remote learning day for all students.

These are challenging times for both parents, students and staff. Mrs. Turner will always make recommendations based on the health and safety of students and staff.

## 6. **Student Representatives**

- \* Tyler Mendela  
12/23 – Social, Emotional Learning Day – Great Success. This was a day filled with activities. Hopes to do more of the same throughout the year.
- \* Lilyana Ricardo  
Update on Remote Learning and switch to hybrid. Transition went well. Students in AP classes were concerned if they were staying on track, which they are. Most students were comfortable with remote learning. There were no issues with communication or discussions. Many hope, with hybrid everything will continue to go smoothly.

\* Gena Buckley

Gena also commented on the transition from remote learning and hybrid. She indicated that remote learning was easy to adapt to. The switch back to hybrid went well. She is grateful for everyone's hard work switching from remote to hybrid.

7. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

8. **Board Member/Committee Reports**

A. Finance/Operations - Matthew Tencza, School Business Manager

- Review of the following: Accounts by Facilities Report for the month of December 2020; The Cumulative Total Board of Education Budget percentage by Month; and Board of Education Budget Summary December 2020.
- The Accounts by Facilities Report will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance

B. Personnel Report – Mrs. Turner, Interim Superintendent

Board Members reviewed the Personnel Report and there were no questions.

9. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

10. **Board Liaison Reports**

Mr. Seaman  
January 12

--

Harry S. Fisher Elementary School  
PTA Meeting  
Spirit Wear Fundraiser has been 100% on line and ends January 31

Mr. Elsaghir

--

Plymouth Center School

Mrs. Onorfio for PreK was searching for any NAEYC accreditation funding and the PTA voted to fund that.

Spirit Wear Fundraiser just ended, made some money, however, it was more on child fun than profit.

Pasta Haven Fundraiser – February 12 – February 26. Typical take home order form and pick-up date.

PTA is still discussing upcoming spring fundraiser and spring book fair.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

--

Eli Terry Jr. Middle School

PTA gave Ms. Suffridge \$500 to do a winter fun day the last 2 days of school.

Ms. Suffridge was able to give away a lot of great prizes and do a lot of fun things with kids. Calendar Give Away in full swing – great prizes and well received.

8<sup>th</sup> grade committee to come together within the next month or so. Please contact Linda Schnaars if you are interested in serving on the committee if you have an 8<sup>th</sup> grader.

Mrs. Candrea-Floresciani -- Booster Club  
Waiting to find out about winter sports. There will probably be no spectators or concessions.

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School  
The group is still discussing fundraisers for the end of the year. At this point, it is uncertain if there will be a graduation ceremony or any type of celebration for the graduating seniors. But the PTSA would like to be able to recognize the seniors in some manner. That being said, parents of seniors, reach out to a PTSA member and get involved and also have your senior get involved as well. Look for fundraisers and support them.

Mr. Foote -- SEPTA  
No Report

Mrs. Kremmel -- CABE  
Legislative Breakfasts will be held virtually this year. Nothing has been scheduled in our area as of yet. However, on February 11 from 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. there is a Virtual Legislative Forum scheduled to take place.

Mrs. Johnson -- EdAdvance  
As a point of information, our RESC gives each district a weekly COVID-19 update. Pandemic Impact on EdAdvance – Pros: Opportunity to help districts with our expertise and the capacity EdAdvance has there; Help with school services; able to maintain mandated programs and state-wide training for Adult Education; and Early Childhood Federal COVID funding. Cons: “Fee for Services” programs that depend on enrollment and attendance. Examples: Special Education Programs, BASES – (daycare full/part time); Adult ED – Enrichment; and Birth to three. Neutral Impact – Head Start; Food Service and Transportation.

Budget concerns. Agency’s current response... There is a freeze on all discretionary expenses. Monitor the status of our Health Care Funds. Staffing Reductions by: reorganizing some departments to share positions; there are approximately 15 full time employees across the agency (layoff and unfilled current vacancies); 10 – 11 current employees will be eliminated over 7 different departments for example: Special Education Teachers, Clerical Program Staff, Drivers/Transportation.

Mr. Showers -- District Safety Committee  
No Report

11. **Board Comments**

Mr. Elsaghir – How is a lack of an SAT for many students affecting their college admission? Is it just GPA the colleges are looking at?

Mrs. Turner – SAT and Smarter Balance are currently scheduled for this year. Kathleen do you have any other information as far as college admissions?

Mrs. Mozak-Pezza – SAT’s were offered in October and any senior was able to take it if they chose to. In terms of how the colleges are making their decisions, the way the SAT’s work for some colleges is that if a student doesn’t send in their SAT’s the college doesn’t use it and if they do send it in the college will use it. So, when they say it’s optional, what they really mean is if one doesn’t give the SAT to the college, the individual won’t be



penalized but if the individual does submit it to them, they will take it into consideration in terms of making a decision. There are some colleges that require the SAT as part of the admission process. For the colleges that don't require the SAT and the individual does not submit it, then the college will fall back on the student's transcripts more so than his/her

GPA. The college looks at what type of courses the student took and what his/her grades were in those classes.

Mr. Elsaghir – So, they say it doesn't affect you if you don't send in your SAT's but if two students are somewhat similar, maybe one has a better transcript but the other sent in his/her SAT's, from what you're saying the SAT's will get a little bit of a preference?

Mrs. Mozak-Pezza – They say, basically, if you don't send it, they don't penalize you. Two students basically equivalent, I'm sure varies from school to school.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Teachers are doing a really good job with communications considering what they must have to deal with and they are working with and motivating students.

Mrs. Johnson – To Mrs. Turner – Thank you for doing such a fabulous job and your leadership this year is very much appreciated.

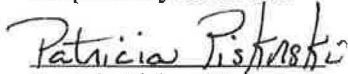
Mr. Showers – Prospect Street School has finally sold.

12. **Next Board Meeting** –The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Wednesday February 10, 2021 at 7 p.m.

13. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, all in favor, motion passes.

Respectfully submitted



Patricia Piskorski  
Recording Secretary  
Plymouth Board of Education