



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
SPECIAL MEETING
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2020

Erin O'Leary
TOWN CLERK
JAN 23 11 51 AM '20

MINUTES

Present: Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani, Mr. Elsaghir (arrived 6:55 p.m.), Mr. Foote (arrived 6:40 p.m.), Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian Mr. Seaman, Mr. Showers.

Absent: Mrs. Johnson; Mrs. Kremmel

Also Present: Dr. Semmel, Superintendent, Mrs. Parsons, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Aronheim, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services, Mr. Hendrickson, Business Manager, Mr. Hults, Principal THS, Ms. Suffridge, Principal EJTMS, Mrs. Turner, Principal PCS; Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology; Mrs. Loveland, Principal, FES

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

Chair Seaman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: To adopt the agenda as presented by Mr. Showers; seconded Mrs. Kulesa and the vote unanimous.

3. **Budget workshop #1 for 2020-2021 Budget**

Dr. Semmel gave overview of process; do have number of kids with acute mental health issues and some academically behind and need support; looking for 4 additional staff who are important to make programing better for kids; we receive 40% of entire budget from State of CT.

Mr. Hendrickson gave update stating in negotiations with union (UAW, Nurses) not involving teachers; slight decrease in transportation from special ed side for net is increase of 9,000; budget increase of \$761,060 or 3.108%. Teachers go to full step increase and that is in budget.

Technology, Rich Trudeau – overview of budget: support for entire district including Wi-Fi, 1-1 program, maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure, classroom technology (maintain and repair i.e. projectors, document cameras, laptops for staff, admn areas of software noting major parts of software deal with licensing, cyber security).

Questions:

*How many tech assistants? 3 and 1 systems specialist who deals with data system, PowerSchool, Educlimber, develop staff training.

*Does the Town reimburse you in this budget for their share? Mr. Hendrickson stated this is net amount district pays.

*Tech assistants is our portion of what we pay? Mr. Hendrickson stated correct; Mr. Trudeau stated tech splits time between school and town.

THS, Mike Hults – similar to last few years with minimal requests; 3 things working on in last 2 years is AP program, culinary and tech ed program; two departments with some change. Culinary trying to replace old equipment and tech ed with fire program and does take money to add between equipment and supplies. Mrs. Parsons stated she has line item for professional development, software and any recurring purchases comes out of her budget; THS is nothing new; textbooks for intervention, AP online psychology, grade 9 needs new titles for English; software for Guidance i.e. Naviance, Edgenuity, PSAT fees from her budget as well as AP English training.

Questions:

*Alternative discipline? Mr. Hults stated detentions where 2 days a week a student can get office detention for an hour after school hours.

ETJMS, Angie Suffridge – Last year received Reading Specialist and part time Music Teacher who took on chorus and this has allowed for smaller classes and students can do chorus and band; Reading for tier 2-3 intervention and keeping informed on which programs working. No change except for a Tutor as now a student with an IEP or severe needs are being supported in ELA, reading, writing and math but not supported in science or social studies or fine arts and asking for tutor to support non supported classes and to help those kids especially those in a larger class as it is a lot of students for one adult; tutor will need teaching degree to help, monitor, redirect. Mrs. Parsons stated need to tweak ELA units to find out best practices; software for practice software for reading and math; Naviance and Star utilized; support for science teachers and bought CREC unit and will be out for support in there; ELA teachers to attend Teachers College Institute this summer. Dr. Semmel stated since most of the increase is in certified salary, most line items did not go up and have cut \$128,000 out of budgets already.

Questions:

*At beginning school year you did a presentation on high scores in ELA and wondering how many of students in tier 3 as whole. Mrs. Parsons stated significant population.

*Tier 2 support done by who? Mrs. Parsons tier 2-3 in reading done by interventionists, tier 2 reviewed and tier 3 is pull out. Fully staff 2 reading interventionists with kids in tier 2 and 3; minimum 150 kids; 355 in school. Major special ed support in intervention in middle or 70 special ed and 93 in addition receive math and 134 ELA.

*How many special ed teachers and paras? Ms. Suffridge stated 5 teachers, 8 paras and 1 tutor. Ms. Aronheim stated her staff does not support tier 3 but some students receive tier 3 intervention. Intervention class is special ed and regular ed and all 3 special ed teachers support classes.

*Consultant services. Mrs. Parsons stated CREC and contracted Teachers College which is on a yearly basis and contract covers 10 days support for someone in building and without that support we are not a project school; if we don't have contract in place we are running curriculum k-8 and would not have support of questions; every year every unit is revamped and republished. Also would not have access to send teachers to coaching institutes, Teachers Institute for NYC program. Ms. Suffridge stated this is a game changer. Mrs. Parsons stated for contract with Teachers College, run because of size and run under 1 school name (run under Fisher).

*What do they do? Mrs. Parsons stated they teach teachers instructional strategies, how to interpret curriculum, using rubrics of reading/writing and work behind scenes; this year is accountability in reading/writing and plan and staff developer checks with developer who delivers. They divide day into 3 sessions with presentation of new material or strategy based on unit changes, go into classroom and watch staff developer implement and we all try; after coaches get new things to try out and do in classroom and coach follows up with teachers so next time we pick up on how did it work and where do we go next.

*Are they doing small or whole group? Mrs. Parsons stated it depends on what asked to do and in alignment with focus. \$740 per teacher per year for access to curriculum.

*21,000 increase since 2017. Mrs. Parsons stated on the contract cannot speak to 2017 actual; 2018 was \$2200 a day and now \$2300 a day; 2019 actual has more than just CREC and Teachers College.

*What did we do prior to this? Mrs. Parsons stated bought textbooks at cost of 250,000. This is not PowerPoint or computer based but teachers read through units of study and not every student has textbooks, teachers are delivering lessons from Teachers College and work is in authentic literature.

*Why are we paying this for teachers who have master's degrees? Mrs. Parsons stated the current is constantly changing on refining materials and option to this is to hire people to write curriculum and buy material to support it or go back into program like Story Town.

Dr. Semmel stated when we bring in teachers to teach teachers, we want professionals to work better, they need more training and to continue down the path; developing reading skills have gotten more complicated. We are continuing to invest in our teachers and their professional development. Think about it as a shared service and CREC made this available at a fair price for work they did. Mrs. Parsons stated since adaptive workshop, we went from 35% to 60% efficiency.

*In DRG, how many people use this? Mrs. Parsons stated she will look but feels more than half of the State of CT.

*In Waterbury with k-5 school, 900 students, 3 reading teachers and CK3LI comes in to train and wondering why we did not pick up that service. Mrs. Parsons stated she was not familiar with that; Mrs. Lucian stated it is training for tier and train on how to teach reading and focus areas. CK3LI has mentors/coach models and facilitator modeled for reading team and do walkthroughs. Will share info and find out expense. Dr. Semmel stated it will be interesting to see and wonder why Waterbury chose that and what does evidence show and does that make an impact. Mrs. Parsons said it sounds like similar model to what Teachers College is, but we are using less days as staff developer works with coaches.

FES, Kim Loveland – Kept status quo budget, increase in language arts material shifting from supplies as teachers will purchase quick words book, Edu license and maintain library in classroom; request academic tutor and 2nd math coach; for academic year looking to maintain 2 tutors with 165 in ELA in tier 1 and 2; 129 in math identified in tier 2 and 3; math 129 students; adding a tutor it would be 50 students per tutor for servicing; currently 70+ kids for tutor; tutor is direct service for kids, implementing plans and ensuring students are making gains needed to make. Asking for 2nd coach as in math currently have 18 classrooms to manage and analyze data on tier 1 and case manage kids; do progress monitoring, provide training and teacher resources. Struggle with one math coach is a struggle.

Question:

*Like presentation of data but went too quick. Ms. Loveland stated 1-5 grades, 165 students in tier 2 or 3 for ELA; 129 star for tier 2 or 3 in math. Mrs. Parsons stated in an ideal world we would have certified teacher doing that work.

*Any reading interventionist in school? Ms. Loveland stated no, one teacher is coach although certified in that. Mrs. Parsons stated with 2 coaches ELA, managing tutors who are managing kids, and doing direct service with tutors and teachers; similar kids in math with one coach.

*Plan for dean? Dr. Semmel stated that is Title 1 where Dean is.

*Where is math coach within budget? Mrs. Parsons stated in her budget and part of increase in coaches' line. Ms. Loveland stated at FES of current 5th graders only 56% of those are with us since "K" and takes time for those in/out to identify needs and rely on coaches to diagnose those kids and

then they train coaches to work with them. Mrs. Parsons stated to support both PCS and FES, we use Foundations, minimal new materials for content areas, intervention materials, software and Lexia. *Do we change curriculum every year? Mrs. Parsons stated, no, it stays steady for a while; every 5 years will review a content area and playing a bit of catch up when made big shift to common core and all curriculum needs to be updated and first year not changing anything. We add books as it comes up, example given on when need a better or different book or need another choice. Dr. Semmel stated they are either adding to collection for such things as a library book, not textbook. These books fit the curriculum.

*Elementary salary increase, is that contractual? Mr. Hendrickson stated correct, contractual. Mrs. Parsons stated the tutor is not in that line as not a salary nor is it a coach. Dean is in Title 1 funding. This line is teacher step increase at FES.

Sherry Turner, PCS – status quo; few changes in language art supplies and early literacy supplies; has been helpful to have 3 sections of 2nd grade as smaller class sizes had impact on student achievement. No additional staff request. Mrs. Parsons stated if they buy a new book for 2nd grade at PCS it then goes to same teacher level at FES. Replacement or individual student needs comes from school level budget.

Special Education, Lindsay Aronheim

Working on compliance, student welfare to make sure all students get to where they need to be; items pointed out are increase in special ed transportation costs, budgeting for same amount of students to be outplaced next year but many budgeted for last year are not with us this year; 65% are stable from one year to next. Also looking at adding .4 social worker position to go one day at middle school as have seen uptake in crisis for middle and high with crisis number. Special ed paras had significant increase as big increase in preK program and added paras to support that.

Questions:

*Social worker and psychologist? Ms. Aronheim stated .4 or two days a week or \$18,727. 2 psychologists, one full time at high and middle; social worker is 3 days at high and 2 at middle and looking to increase one day in each school.

*Do you find social worker and psychologists are dealing with crises and not able to service children a tier below? Ms. Aronheim stated data did not show how much spending in crisis and asked them to start looking; reviewed November/December numbers are for one month spent 35 hours in crisis work including 30-minute student stressed out and not expecting to see some more acute mental health problems. They do struggle with not pulling students from academic courses and if limited time in school you have limited time to pull student. Crisis is unpredictable and when it will happen but do not know where or who; see students weekly if not ever other day who may have never been seen before; high school counselors collecting data and they spent 18 hours in crisis. 40% students live in poverty and 20% in program for special behavior and we struggle to meet all those needs.

*Would you say over last 5-10 years, an increase? Ms. Aronheim stated, absolutely and have hard data on that; tracking data on DCF, 2-1-1 and sometimes staff makes decision for 911 level to transport; in 2017-18, ETJMS and THS had 32 calls; in 2018-19, 38.

She stated the board needs to understand value of mental health facilitator in building and if did not have appropriate staff what other costs might you look at to meet needs; numbers differ and outplacements for behavior costs is about \$90,000 not including transportation; transportation is unpredictable as may need monitor or not; may need 1-1 para and we pay that cost.

Paul Hendrickson stated he will review **Department 80**

Transportation, regular is in town; magnet schools, diesel, tech schools and not changing number of buses of 14 in town. Magnet reimbursed by grant from state but cost of bus, by contract, supply 38,000 gallons of diesel oil to transportation company and out to bid and price back at \$79,089; transportation tech schools have 4 buses with slight increase contractual.

Health insurance up modest 3.77% due to switch from 3rd party to State plan and will be notified by the State of increase projected at 8% by consultant in late March or early April.

Social security /Medicare at 2.5% increase.

Unemployment comp have not had much and decreased.

Early retirements, one last year.

Questions:

*What is early retirement? Mr. Hendrickson stated he would prefer one on one conversation

*Contingency? Mr. Hendrickson stated for perspective wage increases and some contracts not yet settled.

*SRO, who pays? Dr. Semmel stated the town pays.

Chair Seaman stated this is tough and has strong feeling this budget will not pass, as presented, to the BOF or Town Council and would like each board member to take home, review and see where you think we can make cuts; not interested in cutting teachers, janitors, music, art; do not take away from kids. Sympathize with principals and teachers and we are on your side but have responsibility on other side. It can be approved here but does not mean pass over there. He asked Dr. Semmel to put together a list of must have., would like to have, maybe give a little here.

Dr. Semmel stated when they developed the budget, they tried to make sure leaving kids and those working with them alone, a great majority is contractual and reduced 128,000 from central office stuff and will absolutely do what asking. He asked the Board as going into budget, look for things with questions, and before coming back next week for more conversation, would be great if he had that info sooner rather than later. Discussion held and the Board members will go direct to Dr. Semmel and copy Walt; questions due by Monday night.

Discussion held on dollar amount and to look at reducing increase requested by half. The mayor does not want to raise taxes at all. Mrs. Kulesa stated it is the BOE's responsibility to put together a budget and if they chose to cut, it's cut but not our responsibility to please. Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani stated we just are recovering and not to take actions to hurt budget. Mr. Foote stated we are third from bottom of towns in spending and last year said it was our job to present our budget if we think it is fair and if not, the BOF deals with it.

Further discussion on areas including CAFE is \$19,000 and can look at that. Dr. Semmel stated that is a good example if looking to reduce and area to think about. 80% of budget is around staff and only realistic way to cut is by cutting staff as he will not find that kind of money in there. Discussion held.

4. Public Comment (3-minute limit per speaker)

a. Cory Mazon and Nicole Lévesque - as literacy coaches speaking in support of Ms. Loveland's request for coaches at FES, giving overview on their job as coaches and stating a 2nd math coach needed.

b. Dina Schaffrick, math coach at FES speaking on behalf of FES proposal for math coach and additional tutor position. She further explained her role as math coach; 4 tutors working with student from k-5 or 287 students. Need additional math coach and tutor.

c. Amy Battisto, teacher 1st grade at FES – ask for support for another math coach for school with overview about what teachers do in a day for students and planning; math is very complex and reviewed what a teacher plans for in math.

d. Allison Curtiss – grade 2 at FES spoke asking to approve 2nd math coach for FES; reviewed what coaches do and how they help teachers and how they supervise and guide tutors.

e. Michelle Luba, social worker for THS and ETJMS spoke in support of a .4 social worker; reviewed crisis and what it is.

f. Angie Suffridge – we work hard to create a budget that is fair and what kids need but it is not all of what kids and staff need; could use more special ed teachers and paras; we all do extra and when come to say this is what we need, it is what they need. Appreciate what the Board does and would vote for budget even if taxes go up.

Chair Seaman stated the next budget meeting is January 22nd at 6 pm in the library

5. **Adjournment**

MOTION: Motion to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. by Mr. Showers; seconded Mr. Foote and the vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robin Gudeczauskas". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Robin Gudeczauskas
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education