

BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
NOVEMBER 18, 2020
MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 6:02 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman
 Karen Jew, Secretary
 Rebecca Howie
 Alison Marsano

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance:

Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy
Tiffany Testa, Co-Facilitator, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Adv. Cmte.
Brian Rater, Chair, Brookline Finance Committee
Dennis Comeau, Brookline Finance Committee / Solar Committee

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS - None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brookline School Board [October 28, 2020](#)

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 2, Line 46; correct the spelling of “into”
- Page 3, Line 23; replace the “.” with a “,” following “typical peers” and delete “Based on that decision”
- Page 4, Line 6; insert “going from” following “That means”
- Page 4, Lines 9-10; remove the last sentence
- Page 9, Line 47; replace “of” with “or”
- Page 10, Lines 10-11; replace “One of the things they brought up was” with “Some of the suggestions were”
- Page 12, Line 25; replace “projects” with “project”
- Page 12, Line 36; insert “than” following “more”

MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO APPROVE, AS AMENDED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

1 Brookline School Board – **Public Hearing** [October 28, 2020](#)

2
3 **MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO APPROVE, AS PRESENTED**
4 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**
5 **MOTION CARRIED**
6 **5-0-0**

7
8 **PUBLIC INPUT** - None

9
10 **PRINCIPALS’ REPORT**

11
12 Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA), highlighted items from the
13 Administrator’s Report provided with the [agenda](#).

14
15 Occurring in both schools is the New Hampshire SHARE Program (non-profit); the Richard Maghakian
16 Memorial School (RMMS) is seeking pajamas and the CSDA is collecting socks. November 3rd was a
17 professional development day during which staff members were the presenters. The schools participated in the
18 “Holiday Cards for Our Military Challenge”. Part of the Choose Love Program is the 30 days of Gratitude for
19 November – included in each day’s announcements is a sharing of things we are thankful for.

20
21 The Hollis-Brookline Rotary, in conjunction with Trader Joe’s, surprised the staff and teachers with bouquets of
22 flowers and plants. Over the past two days, the Brookline PTO sponsored a drop-in hot chocolate day. On
23 behalf of Principal Molinari and the teaching staff at both schools, she expressed gratitude for all of the
24 organizations that provide support.

25
26 Enrollment has stayed consistent since last reported. There was a change in one 6th grade classroom; addition of
27 in-person student. The overall numbers for CSDA remained at 247; the additional in-person student was offset
28 by an in-person student moving to homeschooling.

29
30 **DISCUSSION**

31
32 - COVID 19 Update – Calendar Discussion; potential temporary pivot for winter break (December/January)

33
34 Assistant Superintendent Thompson commended the Principals for their leadership. Our schools continue to do
35 an incredible job with managing COVID-19, and as a result, since the last meeting, there have been no new
36 cases in Brookline. In total, there has been 1 case in the Brookline schools and 8 overall as a district. In
37 comparison to surrounding districts, that is absolutely phenomenal.

38
39 During a conference call with Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist, it was reported that even with the
40 increasing number of cases across the State, there has been a steadying of cases in schools.

41
42 Parents and staff were informed today of a change to the travel quarantine procedures as outlined by the DHHS.
43 An individual who travels is able to quarantine for seven days, and on or after the 7 days, they can test out. This
44 test out option is only for travel.

45
46 The question that has been on people’s minds is what we are doing with our school calendar in light of the fact
47 that many schools in the surrounding area and across the State have plans to go into remote after the
48 Thanksgiving break. At this time, it is not the intention of the District to move into remote learning. It is
49 believed there is the staffing needed to allow the schools to remain open from Thanksgiving to Christmas.
50 Conversations are taking place, as a Leadership Team and with the Association, regarding the two weeks

1 following Christmas. There are a number of districts that have indicated they will be closed until Martin Luther
2 Kind, Jr., (MLK) weekend.

3
4 It was stressed a decision to move to remote is likely to be based on staffing levels and not on the number of
5 cases of COVID-19 in our school. This is, in large part, due to childcare issues. When a neighboring district
6 moves to remote, many of our teachers do not have childcare, and need to work remotely as well. That is really
7 what is compromising our staffing levels at this time. Looking at the number of requests for remote work, it is
8 believed the District can remain open from Thanksgiving until Christmas.

9
10 Chairman Haag questioned how teachers would manage working remotely and providing childcare,
11 commenting on the amount of work required to take on both tasks. Assistant Superintendent Thompson spoke
12 of how teachers were able to do it in March. It is very challenging. There needs to be flexibility, e.g., teachers
13 are creating instructional videos in the evenings. There is a tremendous amount of creativity, and it is not an
14 easy thing to do, but being at home and providing instruction to students while your children may be remote
15 learning as well is a better option for our staff.

16
17 Chairman Haag questioned if the curriculum would change for that period to provide flexibility. The reason it
18 worked before is because of the amount of flexibility. Assistant Superintendent Thompson stated it to be
19 something the Administration continues to look at. There is the need to balance the need for our teachers to
20 have some level of flexibility with their own families, but also with providing a consistent schedule. That was
21 definitely the feedback received in March; the consistency of remote learning from one teacher to another and
22 having a set daily schedule. The ability for the District to remain open just may not be there, particularly after
23 Christmas. Under the FFCRA, families are entitled to this leave time. Without that remote option, they will
24 access that.

25
26 Principal Bouley noted something being looked at seriously is that on Fridays the remote teachers could
27 collaborate, as they do now, with their grade level teams, but they can help to guide them to help prepare them
28 as far as sticking to their current schedules. Part of it is we can be flexible in our schedules, but at the same
29 time we really need, and parents will depend on that stability and structure. That is really going to be important
30 for that two weeks. The fact that we will be able to provide teachers the opportunity to prepare for that and give
31 advance notice (hopefully) to parents will help with the anxiety that comes along with that type of situation.
32 The fact that we have our specialists that are used to now teaching remotely, provides that down time; students
33 are doing fun activities.

34
35 Vice Chairman Sarris agreed with the importance of consistency. She spoke of the difference between having
36 classroom teachers and remote teaching in sync and all remote teachers needing to be in sync. Once everyone is
37 remote, if they have that collaboration time and can set a consistent standard, they can create a more optimal
38 environment that also potentially satisfies the needs of the families. It will be helpful for there to be some sort
39 of shift to optimize the remote environment for everybody and to have that consistency, but she does not think
40 we should look at it as the same as when you have both remote and in person having to do the same thing at the
41 same time because you will have teachers that have different schedules and availability. The collaboration time
42 with the teachers will be important.

43
44 Principal Bouley suggested the remote and in-person teachers stick with their current schedules, and spoke of
45 students who receive contracted special education services from individuals whose schedules are based upon
46 multiple students in multiple schools.

47 Chairman Haag questioned the difference between Thanksgiving and Christmas; what is happening at
48 Christmas that all of a sudden the staffing inflection point happens. Is it an anticipation of more people
49 traveling? Assistant Superintendent Thompson responded the Administration is expecting more travel. Parents
50 have been asked to indicate if there is the potential for travel over the holidays. Few parents have indicated they

1 are traveling. We have been looking at it through the H.R. lens. For example, earlier this week Milford
2 indicated that they were going to move to full remote from Thanksgiving to Christmas. We have staff members
3 whose children go to school in the Milford schools. We have been taking those requests for remote work and
4 analyzing whether or not we are able to provide supervision in the classroom for a teacher to move to remote. It
5 is believed, based on all of the requests received, that Thanksgiving to Christmas, as of this moment, the District
6 is able to remain open. What happens after the Christmas break is that additional neighboring districts that have
7 indicated they will close after Christmas. That is the tipping point for us; we are not going to be able to support
8 that. It is important to note that the return date of January 19th is actually ten school days. It is believed we will
9 be able to go remote because we don't believe that we have the staff to be able to support in-person learning
10 during that time.

11
12 Member Marsano questioned what prompted the change by the State to allow for the test-out option, and if that
13 was addressed by Dr. Chan. Assistant Superintendent Thompson responded what prompted the change, which
14 was not directly addressed by Dr. Chan, was a Safer-at-Home Order from Governor Sununu. When that came
15 down as guidance, the Administrative Team did not address it right away. As we have indicated all along, we
16 will follow the guidance of DHHS. It sometimes contradicts that of the Governor and the Safer-at-Home
17 Orders and at times the guidance from the CDC. One of the things seen with the transmission of the virus is
18 that days 5-7 is typically the time in which transmission occurs. By moving to that day 7 you hope to capture
19 the number of people who potentially could have exposure. Part of the issue with the order is that you can get
20 tested on day 7 and may not get results until day 14. There are incredibly long lines and people being turned
21 away. Although there is a change to the 7 day testing from the 14 day quarantine, he believes that a number of
22 people will still be out for the full 14 days. Member Marsano stressed you cannot return until the test results
23 come back negative. The rapid test is not applicable.

24
25 Member Marsano questioned when the request to be notified about family travel plans went out, and was told it
26 has been included in the Principal newsletters and went out in an email earlier in the day.

27
28 Chairman Haag questioned if families have been asked about being visited by individuals from other states, and
29 was told they were not. That is something that came up in a call with DHHS earlier in the day. At this time, the
30 DHHS does not recommend individuals who reside with someone who is quarantining (for any reason) to
31 quarantine themselves. They can still come to school.

32
33 Member Marsano questioned, and was told there has not yet been determined a pivot day following the
34 November date.

35
36 Assistant Superintendent Thompson commented it would be appropriate for parents and families to begin the
37 planning process for the SAU to be fully remote after Christmas. He emphasized, the desire is to remain open
38 from Thanksgiving to Christmas; however, things change quickly.

39
40 Asked at what point the decision will be made and communicated, Assistant Superintendent Thompson
41 responded the Administration has not identified that as of yet. A conversation needs to be had with various
42 stakeholders. The message now is that, while not final, parents should plan for that. In accordance with the
43 Return to School Plan, that is not something that requires a Board vote. The Superintendent was given the
44 authority to make those day-to-day decisions.

45 ***There being no objection, the Board went out of the regular order of business to take up discussion of the***
46 ***Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee update and the Brookline Schools – Energy Tour Update.***

47
48 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Update

1 The Committee is comprised of many community members having various backgrounds, and is co-facilitated
2 by Superintendent Corey and Tiffany Testa, a Hollis resident and educator and someone having a background in
3 DEI. The group has met regularly for the past few months.

4
5 The Committee has been working on defining their vision, purpose, and goals as well as terms; what does
6 diversity, equity, and inclusion mean. They have reviewed and are looking forward to feedback relative to the
7 editing of the resolution brought before the Boards. They have agreed on a process to address district
8 components through that DEI lens. In conversations he has had with Ms. Testa, she has emphasized;

9
10 *“The focus of the group, while action oriented, is also prioritizing consensus building. We are a community-
11 based advisory group able to provide the Superintendent with a diverse community perspective and guidance
12 with clear limits as to what actions we can do beyond give perspective and possible next steps. It is important
13 that the boards and community are clear our goal is not to give professional opinion or advice as to how to
14 address diversity, equity, and inclusion. What we do see possible as a focus and aim is providing a thoughtful
15 pulse as to where our community is at, and to propose possible next steps the district could engage in toward
16 developing a student experience with regard to DEI that is vetted by community members. We continue to work
17 on the resolution as we see it serving as the Board’s support of starting this work. At the same time, we
18 acknowledge a need to present a resolution that already has consensus among the group. It seems important to
19 note the positive impact this resolution, Committee, and the work in general has already had in serving to
20 initiate and support dialogue on students’ learning, experience, and our district-wide goals for HB graduates
21 entertaining a multi-cultural world.”*

22
23 - Brookline Schools – Energy Tour Update

24
25 Assistant Superintendent Thompson spoke of the presentations on energy efficiencies provided at the last
26 meeting. Mike Davey, Business Development Manager, Energy Efficient Investments (EEI) and Dick Henry,
27 DDH Energy Consulting Services have both worked very closely with the Hollis School District on a number of
28 energy efficient projects. Both provided different avenues to possible projects moving forward. On November
29 9th and 12th, tours of the buildings were conducted during which Board members were able to view firsthand the
30 items highlighted in the presentations.

31
32 At the December meeting, the discussion will be centered around the budget and which direction to take moving
33 forward.

34
35 Chairman Haag stated appreciation for both organizations being available to participate in the tours. He was
36 enthused with the idea of energy opportunities so that we can see a payback in X amount of years, and thinking
37 long-term savings. Also discussed was space utilization within RMMS. That building has been renovated 4
38 times (last one being 20[±] years ago).

39
40 He believes the EEI group offered an approach that felt a little more turnkey and quicker. He is a little
41 concerned with the schedule and budget from the DDH team just because of the cycle being based on having to
42 create a warrant for this year to approve an energy audit for next year before moving further, whereas EEI
43 would do all of that up front and then we would come forward with a warrant in the following year. He found
44 that to be a more efficient approach from a schedule standpoint; particularly knowing the way interest rates are
45 currently. He feels if we wait too long those bonds become more expensive.

46
47 Both companies offered interesting thoughts and design, but he appreciated EEI’s information on Return on
48 Investment (RoI), and they gave some hands on approaches during the tour. He is aware of the success with
49 DDH in Hollis and would not want to discount that.

1 Member Jew stated agreement. She liked both presentations, but EEI seemed to have something that would
2 really give us that energy efficiency savings, the shorter RoI, and it seemed the overall project would cost the
3 taxpayers less than maybe getting the most energy efficient building in the State if going with a different
4 solution, which would be wonderful, but not necessarily realistic.

5
6 Vice Chairman Sarris commented the opportunity with DDH is they are known. We have seen their work in the
7 community. There is sort of some pie in the sky opportunities there, but it is not necessarily what, practically
8 speaking, our community would respond to positively and what we are looking for. She believes there to be
9 some red flags with DDH with the potential to have to come back to ask taxpayers for more money. We don't
10 want to find ourselves in that position, and were not comfortable with that possibility. EEI is proven in other
11 communities. They may not be as cutting edge and design-oriented, but we really have to think about what
12 suits our community best.

13
14 Member Marsano stated agreement with DDH being a known commodity having worked with the Hollis School
15 District. They would be happy to accommodate any wish or want to make RMMS the most energy efficient
16 building in the State, but we really have to balance energy efficiency with cost effectiveness and what we really
17 need in the Town. EEI provided a breakout of the RoI. She liked that they talked about guarantees on that RoI,
18 if not achieved what the repercussions would be, and that they will meet the quoted cost.

19
20 Member Jew added it is appealing that they oversee the entirety of the project. Their focus is school buildings.

21
22 Chairman Haag reiterated the key takeaways were energy efficiency, lighting, controls, and HVAC. There is
23 the space utilization with the RMMS entrance, the gymnasium and breaking one wall out. The Board is
24 encouraged to keep the conversation going, and discuss what that looks like from a budget standpoint and
25 strategy.

26
27 Dennis Comeau, Member, Brookline Finance Committee / Solar Committee

28
29 The Selectboard established the Solar Committee to investigate energy efficiencies for other Town buildings.
30 They received four RFPs including from these two groups. Their recommendation to the Selectboard was for
31 EEI for all of the exact same reasons the Board has shared. They felt very comfortable with DDH. They liked
32 their methodology, that we have a local example of their work, but ultimately it seemed as though EEI's rolodex
33 was even deeper in terms of other communities within the State. What it really came down to was no up-front
34 cost, which is believed to be much more palatable to voters and to give actionable information in order to
35 properly present the warrant, to get that energy audit done without having to allocate funds to do so, and the
36 guarantee.

37
38 ***The Board returned to the regular order of business.***

1 ***Brian Rater, Chair, Brookline Finance Committee, called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at***
2 ***6:45 p.m. Also present was Dennis Comeau. As stated on their agenda, the Finance Committee was present***
3 ***to discuss the Fiscal Year 2022 draft budget proposal.***

4
5 - FY22 Draft Budget Proposal

6
7 Assistant Superintendent Thompson note the District is in the middle of the FY22 budget process. This process
8 of creating the FY22 budget began last June. He commended the building Principals noting the time intensive
9 process involved in building a budget from the ground up. At the end of September, Principals submit their list
10 of items that meet the instructional needs identified for their building. That list is referred to as Round 1 of the
11 budget. Occasionally that list includes nice-to-have item(s). In late October, it moves into Round 2, which is
12 the result of the initial budget having been scrutinized by the Assistant Superintendents and Business
13 Administrator. They begin the process of prioritizing what is intended to be funded. Round 3 is a review and
14 feedback by the Superintendent. That is where we are at in the process.

15
16 The building Principals do an excellent job of advocating for the students in their building, and have to justify
17 every item in their budget multiple times over the course of several months. What will be shared tonight are the
18 new items; those that were not part of the FY21 budget that are believed to be a priority.

19
20 Principal Bouley noted the information provided with the agenda shows all items that have been discussed;
21 however, over the course of the review process, some of the items have gone from having an associated cost to
22 a \$0 cost when either other means of funding have been identified or the item(s) has been pulled from the
23 proposed budget for the coming year.

24
25 Under the heading of Academics, costs listed for Social Studies Curriculum (RMMS; \$4,000 and CSDA;
26 \$3,000) represents \$1,000 per grade level. Supplemental materials will be purchased for the curriculum. The
27 New Hampshire curriculum standards are intended to be updated for social studies (was intended for
28 completion in FY20).

29
30 For CSDA, a recommendation has been made for the purchase of Study Island (\$1,386 would cover student
31 participation fees). The online program is for formative assessment for teachers. It covers the entire
32 curriculum. The fact that we are using computers so much and the lag because of COVID, we are feeling the
33 push that we need to have additional support for teachers; some tools to check for mastery across the
34 curriculum. There are over 600,000 questions across the curriculum that are already standard based for the
35 State. It is easy information that can be pulled up and designed for their classroom or specific students.

36
37 Member Marsano commented this is different than Aimsweb; more to be used at the end of a unit. Principal
38 Bouley stated it could also be used during a unit. It is formative so they can check to see if students are
39 learning/understanding the material. It is supplemental materials. It will also allow them to see, at the end of
40 the unit, are students mastering the material or do they have to go back and reteach.

41
42 Chairman Haag questioned if the social studies curriculum cost was budgeted for this year. Principal Bouley
43 stated it was put in the budget, but if not provided for this year, it will be zeroed out and funds returned to the
44 tax base.

45
46 Vice Chairman Sarris questioned, and was informed, if the standards come out, we will be required to update
47 our curriculum. The cost is included in the budget with anticipation of that happening. Asked if there is
48 guidance on the materials that should be used, Principal Bouley stated it is typically at the discretion of the
49 district. Asked what the materials will be, Principal Bouley spoke of teacher training and a review of the
50 standards to determine what materials are on hand and which are needed. Assistant Superintendent Thompson

1 remarked if the trend is similar to what has been seen in the past, particularly with social studies, there is more
2 of an emphasis on skills than content.

3
4 For CSDA, \$2,000 is identified for the Band and Orchestra Program. That is part of a salary paid to the band
5 and orchestra teachers. They teach the students before and after school. Asked what was removed from that
6 (\$8,000 listed in the first round), Assistant Superintendent Thompson stated the District has been slowly
7 transitioning from the positions being fully funded through Title IV grant funds; we are slowly moving portions
8 of that funding out of Title IV and into the regular operating budget to avoid a spike in a particular year's
9 budget. Asked how it was funded prior to utilization of Title IV, he indicated it was a pay-to-play model. That
10 was identified as being inequitable as it is not the case in Hollis.

11
12 Member Marsano commented in some ways there is still some inequity in that in Hollis they run the program
13 during the school day and in Brookline we have it before school. If going to move to a model where it is paid
14 by the District, which she is not opposed to, we need to try and find a way to tie it into the school day. Principal
15 Bouley noted personnel is not available for that scenario.

16
17 Under the heading of Personnel, a Science Specialist at CSDA left the District. Given the current environment,
18 the determination was made not to hire for that position for this year. Those funds were utilized to hire
19 additional personnel needed for classroom coverage.

20
21 For FY22, being recommended is splitting the salary for that science specialist position between RMMS and
22 CSDA. The recommendation is to hire two MTSS Interventionists. They would be full-time personnel for
23 regular education reading and math support. Basically, they would be teaching at Tier I (core instruction) and
24 Tier II (supporting instruction with targeted interventions). Data such as that obtained through the Aimsweb
25 testing will be used to identify needed targeted interventions. What we are realizing is we will have more data
26 particularly this year, and we need the personnel in order to run the Response to Intervention (RtI) Program.
27 Part of that is having a multi-tiered intervention program, which requires additional interventionists. Part of
28 the salary at each of the schools would be offset by the \$29,137 in savings from the science position that was
29 not filled.

30
31 Vice Chairman Sarris questioned what multi-tiered intervention looks like in the curriculum. Principal Bouley
32 stated a multi-tiered system of support is an over-arching program, and under that you would have a guidance
33 counselor, math interventionist, reading interventionist, two special interventionists, speech psychologist, etc.
34 The entire team would meet monthly as a District so we can see how our intervention programs are working.
35 The RtI team is at the building level. Typically they are the ones that would be doing the benchmarking; utilize
36 the data to identify students in the Tier I and Tier II, and target those at the Tier II level. You would check for
37 progress monitoring every 4-8 weeks. It would be targeted for their specific needs for either reading and/or
38 math.

39
40 Chairman Haag commented on there being two reading specialists and one math specialist at each building, and
41 asked what the difference is with what they do versus what the special interventionists would be doing. The
42 response was that the interventionists would actually help support and work with the reading specialist and math
43 specialist. The bottom line is we need additional support in order to target the Tier II level of students.

44
45 As an example, if you have three levels, the Tier III is typically students who are receiving special services, Tier
46 I is the core curriculum at the top, and Tier II are students who need to be brought up to Tier I. For instance,
47 those students would fall in the average category as opposed to proficient on State testing. The reading and
48 math specialists teach classes in addition to doing intervention. They don't have enough time in their schedules
49 to really provide the intervention needed.

1 Member Jew commented a need that is not being met has been identified. Principal Bouley stated that to be the
2 case noting concern that once the Aimsweb analysis is done from this fall and the SAS testing, which will be
3 done in December, we will have an uptick in the number of students in the Tier II level.
4

5 Vice Chairman Sarris remarked she believes the accelerated and proficient areas could have overlap. The
6 current accelerated program is a very small, targeted group of students. She would like to review if there is the
7 potential for a larger group of students to participate in the accelerated program. There is an accelerated teacher
8 for 3 students that happen to have continued to excel in a difficult environment. We might need to look at
9 merging the accelerated group with the regular education. That is something under consideration for efficiency
10 purposes.
11

12 Principal Bouley stated the accelerated program for the 6th grade is about 12 students. Assistant Superintendent
13 Thompson noted the class size is growing. The point is not lost, but they have seen that class go from 3
14 students (8 years ago), and it seems to be growing over time. We are seeing more accelerated students
15 achieving at high levels, but we are also seeing students at the other end. There is a gap that is growing. The
16 purpose of an MTSS model is the short, quick intervention; fill in gaps in a student's instruction so they don't
17 end up in special education and can keep pace with some of their peers.
18

19 Principal Bouley reiterated it is targeted by student. When we say they have these interventions, they will be
20 rotating with these small groups. Typically it is no more than 3-4 students for the program to be successful.
21

22 Member Marsano commented right now we are using that position (science) to hire a classroom teacher. We
23 have grades 3 and 4 at five teachers. Even if we do not go remote next year, and the numbers stay exactly the
24 same, not counting for changes in the real estate market, if dividing those 22 kids by 4 classrooms that is 5+
25 kids per classroom and puts it at 21 and 22 per classroom in grade 4, and not quite as bad in grade 5 next year.
26 She sees that as getting high up in the educational specifications, which is not what the Board has sought. She
27 if the district would be better served by having 1 MTSS interventionist in each building and expending the
28 funds on the hiring of 1-2 more teachers for the next school year knowing that this Town has continued to grow
29 and expand. She sees the NESDEC data she was provided, and is not confident with the data. It says we will
30 have declining enrollment, and she is not seeing that. She is concerned with classroom sizes for next year, and
31 the need for classroom teachers.
32

33 Chairman Haag suggested a deeper conversation over the addition of 4 FTEs for these positions. Principal
34 Bouley noted the rate for the two positions is low because they are considered instructional assistants who are
35 certified teachers. They would not demand the same salary as a regular classroom teacher. Chairman Haag
36 commented on the cost of benefits. It was noted as instructional assistants and not professional staff, there
37 would not be benefit costs.
38

39 Asked if two positions could be shared across the District, Principal Bouley responded it would depend on the
40 number of students needing the services and issues around scheduling. Member Marsano suggested if a true
41 need then it should be requested, but she is concerned with class sizes and the need for an additional teacher.
42 That science teacher position was counted on as a teacher slot going forward. Chairman Haag noted the District
43 is currently up in the number of teachers from last year. Member Marsano remarked we have stated all along
44 that the only permanent slot was that science teacher slot. Every other teacher we hired this year was
45 temporary. That science teacher slot is the savings utilized to cover the cost of these positions. She would
46 rather the Administration identify the need for the specialists and retain the open position for the teacher.
47

48 Assistant Superintendent Thompson responded it comes down to priorities, and at the end of the day we have to
49 look at the bottom line of this budget. We know that even with some modest requests, we are still looking at an
50 increase. We still have the special education costs increasing significantly next year. What has been articulated

1 by the building administration is having that support within the classroom, through the MTSS model, is a
2 priority that might supersede the class size of 21 or 22. The numbers could go up and that could change the
3 conversation, but a class of 21 or 22 versus push-in support into a classroom for an MTSS model; right now
4 what he is hearing from the building administrators is they want the support for MTSS.

5
6 Chairman Haag commented the data shows enrollment stable for 3 years. If the class size goes larger and we
7 have more intervention, that supports it as well, and from a financial standpoint, having someone that is
8 certified and does not carry those fringe benefits is a very real savings. That may be a better model. After
9 hearing the discussion he has moved from perhaps being opposed to it to saying this does feel compelling.

10
11 Member Marsano commented she was more inclined to suggest both be requested.

12
13 Asked if these interventionist positions are seen as permanent, Principal Bouley stated they are. It is a program
14 that every school has. It really helps the district focus not just on the RtI program but also the special education
15 program. It is really looking at our teaching and philosophy, what additional professional development we may
16 need in the classroom to support the teachers; specifically if we are seeing certain targeted areas that require
17 focus. It also questions our curriculum. It is really a check and balance across the spectrum of learning.

18
19 Assistant Superintendent Thompson spoke of the shared positions (across all 6 schools in the SAU); SAU
20 Directed Substitute. This person would be deployed to any of the buildings, based on need, and would be
21 managed by each human resources. The SAU Directed Facility Substitute would address the shortage of
22 custodians. The SAU Directed Food Service Substitute would provide needed assistance in that area. It is
23 recognized there may be the need to prioritize some of these positions. In that case, the Administration would
24 go with the Directed Facility Substitute given the current environment.

25
26 Asked how the search for the building substitutes has gone this year, Principal Bouley stated all Principals in
27 the SAU have been participating in interviews. Assistant Superintendent Thompson spoke of a number of
28 individuals who have applied in the last week and a half for both the daily guaranteed substitute and regular
29 substitutes. They have found there are a number of college students returning home who have signed up to
30 substitute. Another reason we may be able to stay open from thanksgiving to Christmas is because of these
31 college students. It is temporary and a lot of them go home on MLK weekend. There is a definite need for
32 substitutes.

33
34 Principal Bouley noted the \$500 proposed for the USDA Wellness Policy Coordinator, which is required to help
35 manage the wellness policy, which is a requirement.

36
37 Under the heading of New Computer Equipment, being explored is the possibility of utilizing the Rural
38 Education Achievement Program (REAP) grant funding to purchase iPads and Chromebooks. There are certain
39 applications that were purchased in the past that the school would like to utilize for both science and ELA that
40 are only available for use on an iPad. Certain testing, e.g., Aimsweb, is much easier to do on an iPad.

1 Under the heading of Replacement Computer Equipment, RMMS is seeking 7 staff laptops (replacements for
2 classroom teachers), 1 projector (replacement), 4 Chromebooks for special education and 20 Chromebooks for
3 grade 3. At CSDA, being sought are staff laptops (10), 1 projector, 10 Chromebooks for the library/classrooms
4 and 20 for special education (5 will be utilized by the Read 180 Reading Specialist and the remainder for the
5 three case managers).

6
7 Under the heading of shared services/software, is filtering software (GoGuardian) is sought at both schools.
8 The District currently utilizes Barracuda filtering software to ensure firewall protections. That is being taken
9 out of service (end of life). The request is for filtering software specifically for Chromebooks, which would
10 allow filtering to be on in school as well as at home.

11
12 Under the heading of Safety/Compliance, a fire panel upgrade had been identified in Rounds 1 and 2; however,
13 the Fire Department is of the opinion we can go another year before that upgrade. An Audiometer replacement
14 is needed for the Nurse (\$1,265).

15
16 Under the heading of Facilities/Maintenance, for RMMS sought is an HVAC controller replacement (\$22,178).
17 Chairman Haag commented this seems to be a cart before the horse scenario given the discussion around
18 standardization. Assistant Superintendent Thompson commented on having had a conversation with the
19 Business Administrator today. This is an item in the budget at this time because it was included prior to the
20 discussions with the energy groups. Depending on the direction the Board wishes to pursue, this item may
21 come out of the budget.

22
23 At CSDA, sought are door gaps/drafts (\$3,000), hallway ramp flooring (\$2,500); sections of tile are lifting.
24 Recommended is purchasing cases of tiles that can be replaced by custodial staff. For window balances/sealed
25 (15-20 windows) (\$5,000). Member Marsano questioned if these are any of the windows that have been
26 replaced in the past few years, and if there would be a warrantee to look to. Principal Bouley stated the
27 replacements that have occurred were glass alone. Asked about the total number of windows requiring
28 replacement, Principal Bouley stated the 15-20 proposed is approximately 1/3 of the total. Member Marsano
29 questioned if it would be worthwhile to include window replacement with the RMMS project being discussed.
30 For fencing realignment, \$1,800 is identified (at soccer field).

31
32 At this point in the process, the operating budget is at \$10,090,509 compared to the operating budget of
33 \$9,651,760 for FY21; a difference of \$438,749 or an increase of 4.5%. The new items being requested are not a
34 major driver of that 4.5% increase. What is seen is an increase in New Hampshire Retirement System
35 contribution, increase to health insurance (Guaranteed Maximum Rate of increase approx. 10%), and
36 unanticipated special education costs of \$339,000. Those are unanticipated costs that we are currently paying.

37
38 It is the goal of Student Services to educate every child in the Brookline public schools, but sometimes students
39 have unique needs, and we are not able to do that. Out-of-district programs can be rather expensive. There are
40 some significant increases this year that need to be included in the budget for next year. The Administration
41 could come before the Board with a request to access the Special Education Trust this year knowing that it is a
42 challenging year financially with all of the unanticipated costs including special education.

43
44 Chairman Haag spoke of the one-year lag in reimbursement for special education costs, and that some of this
45 year's unanticipated costs would be supported next year through that reimbursement. Assistant Superintendent
46 Thompson stated that to be the case.

1 The current balance in the Special Education Trust Fund is \$150,000. Ideally, the Administration would like to
2 see the Trust balance at \$225,000. There are some out-of-district tuition costs that are in the neighborhood of
3 \$200,000.

4
5 Mr. Rater question if the targeted amount remains appropriate given some of the increases in special education
6 costs. Assistant Superintendent Thompson stated his belief, at this time, it remains an appropriate target. The
7 State caps the increases that an approved special education school is allowed to have each year (around 5%).
8 The cost of an out-of-district placement is fairly consistent although they rise year over year. The potential of
9 students going out of district could be minimized because we invested in creating programs in district.

10
11 The SAU portion of the FY22 budget is \$345,017. The contingency fund would be allocated \$40,000, the
12 Maintenance Trust \$75,000, and the Special Education Trust \$25,000.

13
14 Vice Chairman Sarris questioned, if needing to access the Special Education Trust this year, would
15 consideration be given to increasing the proposed allocation for the FY22 warrant. Assistant Superintendent
16 Thompson stated the potential, in FY21, to access the trust, which would draw down a portion or all depending
17 on the decisions made by the Board. That would take us further away from that \$225,000 target.

18
19 Assistant Superintendent Thompson commented the \$339,000 in special education costs will also result in the
20 District receiving additional revenue. There are three revenue sources in special education; Medicaid to School
21 Program, what used to be called Catastrophic Aid (a percentage of any child's program cost over \$55,000 is
22 reimbursable), and IDEA Grant. When our costs go up so does the revenue side of things. We are not able to
23 recoup the full amount, but an increase on the revenue side of the ledger will be seen.

24
25 Vice Chairman Sarris spoke of the desire for the Board to discuss extending invitations to our State
26 Representatives to engage in conversations around funding. The Board agreed with the suggestion.

27
28 Mr. Rater commented, because of COVID, air circulation is a significant issue. He encouraged the Board to
29 ensure there is the ability to open windows in the classrooms; particularly at RMMS. He stated the desire for a
30 Budget Workshop to be scheduled. Chairman Haag stated his belief that is targeted for the December
31 timeframe.

32
33 *The Finance Committee departed and continued their regular meeting in the Library.*

34
35 **DELIBERATIONS**

- 36
37 ● To see what action the Board will take regarding the Public School Infrastructure/Facilities Grant

38
39 **MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE AND EXPENDITURE OF**
40 **THE PUBLIC SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF ONE**
41 **HUNDRED FIFTY TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINE DOLLARS (\$152,909) (80% OF**
42 **TOTAL UPPER LIMIT COST BASED ON ESTIMATE PROVIDED IN APPLICATION) FOR**
43 **SECURITY UPGRADES TO RMMS AND CSDA. THE DISTRICT PORTION OF EIGHTY SIX**
44 **THOUSAND EIGHTY SIX DOLLARS (\$86,086) WAS FUNDED THROUGH BUDGETED DISTRICT**
45 **FUNDING**

46 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

1 ON THE QUESTION
2

3 Assistant Superintendent Thompson commented in 2018 Governor Sununu set aside approximately \$30 million
4 for security enhancements to schools. The Brookline School District put in a request for grant funding, which
5 was approved. The initial reimbursement was received for RMMS, which included window security film,
6 cameras, and alert paging. Projects were also done at CSDA that included a new phone system, classroom
7 security window, perimeter safety, and main entrance improvements. Because of COVID, we had that work
8 done, but did not submit for the grant. This number of \$152,909 is the improvements that were originally done
9 as part of the first round of money. In the spring, because of COVID, many districts chose not to accept the
10 State funding understanding they would not be able to complete their project(s). The State reached out to
11 schools to apply for those remaining dollars. Because of the efforts of Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator,
12 the District has been able to complete the additional projects, e.g., cameras, walkie-talkies, solid security door.

13
14 The District has essentially completed approx. \$250,000 worth of state-of-the-art security enhancements since
15 2018, and, if approved this evening, approximately \$174,000 of that \$250,000 will have been paid by the State.

16 **MOTION CARRIED**

17 **5-0-0**

- 18
19 • To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy DAF – Federal Grants
20 *Given its 1st Reading;*

21
22 **MOTION BY MEMBER JEW TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY DAF – FEDERAL**
23 **GRANTS, AS PRESENTED**

24 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

25
26 ON THE QUESTION
27

28 The policy is required for the District to access federal funds. The items outlined in the policy have already
29 been part of the District’s procedures and operating practices. There is now a requirement to have this policy to
30 be able to access those funds.

31 **MOTION CARRIED**

32 **5-0-0**

- 33
34 • To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy EFD – Wellness
35 *Given its 1st Reading;*

36
37 **MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY EF –**
38 **WELLNESS, AS PRESENTED**

39 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

40
41 ON THE QUESTION
42

43 Assistant Superintendent Thompson noted the policy has been worked on for some time. A large group of
44 stakeholders contributed to the draft that was before the Board. For the District to be able to access revenue for
45 the school lunch program, there is the need to have a wellness policy in place. The policy language goes to
46 great lengths to ensure the District is considering the health, wellness, and wellbeing of our students and staff.
47 There is a small stipend in the FY22 budget that will allow an individual in each building to oversee the policy
48 and help run wellness programs that will be brought in on a monthly basis.

49 Member Marsano questioned, after returning to our old normal, will there be the ability to share with a class
50 birthday cupcakes, etc. The writing of the policy does not strictly prohibit it. The language reads; “It is

1 encouraged that birthday, holiday and all other celebrations involve activities rather than food. If food must be
2 included, healthy choices that align with the SMART SNACK standards should be supplied.”. Assistant
3 Superintendent Thompson spoke of being a member of the Wellness Committee and having been engaged in a
4 lot of rich dialogue. He spoke of the amount of effort required to get to the draft policy because of the diverse
5 opinions of many on the committee. The proposed language is intentional in terms of providing a small amount
6 of latitude to the building administration to be able to develop some exceptions to the rule, within reason.

7 **MOTION CARRIED**

8 **5-0-0**

9
10 **ADJOURNMENT**

11
12 **MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO ADJOURN**

13 **SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

14 **MOTION CARRIED**

15 **5-0-0**

16
17 *The November 18, 2020 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.*

18
19
20
21 Date _____ Signed _____