

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Thursday, January 20, 2022

6:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center/Virtual

PRESENT: Eisenthal, Kohls, Meggers, Mix, Ntem-Mensah, Orsene, Pattacini, Patterson, Stefanovicz

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT:

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Chris Pattacini, Chairperson.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Pattacini led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Mr. Geary reviewed that the budget was presented last week and this evening we will start a deep dive into the details of the budget. He reviewed the process, including dates for the next few weeks budget and Board meetings. Mr. Geary presented a full list of staff salaries for the 2022-2023 school year. He went line by line through the Bennet and Bower's staff as well as Central Office staff, explaining that each line represents a payment code, so some staff have more than one line (ie. part of their salary might be covered by a grant, or they could earn a stipend for heading a department etc.). Mr. Geary noted that the salaries presented represent those people that were in MPS at the end of December, with any contractual obligations added and any known retirements taken.

Mr. Geary explained that Adult Ed is funded 54% by the state and 46% by the Board budget.

Mr. Eisenthal asked about the Alliance Grant and confirmation that those funds are on top of the Board Budget. Mr. Geary agreed, all grant funds are on top of any Board of Education funding.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the ESSER II funds and ESSER III funds. Mr. Geary reviewed that the ESSER II funds must be spent by September 2023 and the ESSER III funds can be spent by the end of September 2024. Mr. Geary explained they have not divided the ESSER grants into separate lines and one will flow into the other. It is possible that some positions funded with the ESSER money will be phased out and others will make their way into the Board Budget eventually. Mr. Geary noted that there are no new positions funded by the Board of Education budget.

Mr. Geary reviewed benefits, Social Security costs as well as Town Pension and Defined Contribution, Unemployment, Certified and Non-certified Longevity bonuses as well as Sick Payout Liability. Both grant funding and a living wage comparison was also reviewed.

Mr. Geary reviewed that benefits can vary from someone that does not take our medical insurance, to someone on a family plan. The difference could be up to \$30,000. When teachers retire they typically have been on a family plan while new teachers are usually on a single or couple plan. While medical insurance plans have been rising about 6%, the difference in costs due to retirements and new hires, our line has only risen about 3%.

Ms. Patterson wondered if there was a standard when children can no longer be covered under their parent's insurance. Dental insurance for children ends at age 25 while medical insurance stops when the child turns 26. Ms. Patterson wondered if there were any stipulations about spouse coverage, say if they have coverage through their own employment, etc. Mr. Geary stated that all are eligible regardless of access to other policies.

Mr. Kohls wondered if student enrollment dropped, how would that influence the budget. Mr. Geary noted that it is not as easy as it sounds. While grant funding can change based on enrollment, our budget doesn't automatically drop if we have less students in the fall. We do receive a per pupil expenditure from the state of \$18,000 per student, but we are also responsible for paying tuition for magnet students, as well as providing for any special services they require. Basically some students take only a few thousand dollars to educate, while others take tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mr. Eisenthal asked if the health insurance enrollment followed the calendar year or the fiscal year and when is open enrollment. Mr. Geary clarified the numbers used are the numbers for the fiscal year 22-23. Our insurance year is July 1-June 30. We hold open enrollment in May but people can add and subtract members for specific reasons (such as marriage, birth, divorce, loss of other insurance) at any appropriate time.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if we have a sense of how many retirements to expect

this year. Mr. Geary stated that seven certified staff have put in their retirement notice, and three non-certified staff have as well. Certified staff typically given notice by January because it is in their contract to do so by January 1st in order to receive a full sick payout, if they qualify for it. Hires after 2000 no longer get that benefit.

Living wages were reviewed for surrounding towns. It was discussed how challenging it is finding and retaining food service workers, noon aides, and bus drivers, as well as paras.

Ms. Stefanovicz would like to see how the budget would be impacted if we decided to make all staff fall under the living wages of 1 adult/0 children. Mr. Geary will get that information. It was also suggested that we could estimate the number of people with larger families by looking at our medical insurance data.

D. Public Participation

None.

E. Closing Comments - Board Members

Ms. Stefanovicz felt the amount and depth of knowledge of Mr. Geary is incredible. Being fully versed in the ins and outs of a topic and providing the data to back it up at a high level is appreciated.

Mr. Pattaini agreed. He thanked Mr. Geary and Ms. Clancy for their work on the budget and he looks forward to more in-depth discussions.

Mr. Geary noted that Monday's Board meeting will be treated as a budget workshop for the most part.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary