

GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of February 17, 2022 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Sub-Committee Chairman Bahou called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mr. Bahou, Mr. Gitschier, Mr. Giggey

Members Absent: Mr. Sheehan

Also Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director
Michael Barton, Assistant Superintendent/Principal
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator
Paul Morin, School Committee Member
Gregory Haas, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Kathryn Palladino, ELA, ELE & Social Studies Cluster Chair
Alison Rihani, Director of Special Education
Carol Chisolm, Math & Science Cluster Chair
Mark White, Physical Education Cluster Chair/Athletic Director
Recording Secretary

Chairman Bahou stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the FY23 budget.

Superintendent Davis asked School Business Administrator Michael Knight to join her in presenting the preliminary FY23 budget. She began by updating the subcommittee that the preliminary budget was developed based on the Governor's House Budget Proposal, as well as data and input from administrators, teachers, parents, and community partners and centered around improving student achievement.

The Massachusetts House, Senate and Governor approved a change in the state funding formula for public education. The bill provides an investment of \$1.5 billion into schools over the next seven (7) years and is aimed at tackling inequity, specifically for school districts with higher percentages of low-income students, English language learners and Special Education students in order to close the achievement gap. As a result, the base rate for a vocational student was increased \$744.93, the rate for a special education student was increased \$1,270.35 and the rate for ELL students was increased \$350.95. In addition, low income categories were added in FY21 that did not exist before and continue to be maintained in FY23. We currently have a 61% low income percentage which places us in category 10; therefore, receiving \$5,842.64, which is an increase of \$673.70.

Superintendent Davis informed the members that based on the new rates of pupil expenditures set by the state and our current enrollment, the Foundation Budget increased by \$2,952,770,

which is a 6.3% increase over this year’s budget. She included that this is year 2 of a 6-year SOA implementation; therefore, we should expect roughly the same budget increase over the next four (4) years. Ms. Davis included that only 2% (\$289,918) of this is through our town assignments/minimum required contribution. She also noted that \$2,952,770 is all net school spending required funding that needs to be spent each year in addition to future budget increases.

The preliminary FY23 total budget would be \$53,310,415, which is a 6.36% increase over FY22.

Operating Budget	49,449,500
Transportation	2,525,320
Debt Service	1,335,595
OPEB	0

The preliminary FY23 Budget assessment would be:

Min. Local Contribution	14,778,865	Chapter 70	34,570,635
Transportation Assessment	1,520,304	Chapter 71 (transportation)	1,005,016
<u>Debt Assessment</u>	<u>1,335,595</u>	<u>Excess & Deficiency</u>	<u>100,000</u>
Total Assessment	17,634,764	Total Budget	53,310,415

Superintendent Davis reviewed some notable expenditure changes which include increases to retirement, as well as health/dental insurance and benefits being large budget drivers, despite below market increase due to our position in the Mass Bay Health Trust. Ms. Davis included the use of Excess and Deficiency was decreased from \$200,000 to \$100,000 and comes from the need to meet net school spending.

Superintendent Davis reviewed the proposed budget priorities which focused on teaching and learning, noting instructional, technical, and academic spending dominated the budget expenditure increase as a result of the Student Opportunity Act. Ms. Davis commented the FY23 budget includes personnel investments, as well as investments in programmatic resources, supports, and interventions to close.

Superintendent Davis reviewed the proposed personnel expenditures, noting these were to allow for program improvements, high level instruction, & interventions based on increased enrollment and increased student needs and services to address gaps in learning. The Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment (Mr. Haas), Director of Special Education (Mrs. Rihani), Math/Science Cluster Chair (Ms. Chisolm), ELA/ELE/Social Studies Cluster Chair (Mrs. Palladino), and Physical Education Cluster Chair/Athletic Director (Mr. White), were present to answer questions by the committee.

Detailed information was provided for the following proposed staff additions within the Special Education and ELE departments: three (3) Special Education instructors, two (2) Special Education Worksite Aides, one (1) School Psychologist, two (2) daily Special Education substitutes, two (2) ELE instructors, one (1) ELE Paraprofessional, and one (1) Director of Language Acquisition. The Director of Special Education and ELA, ELE and Social Studies Cluster Chair were present for the discussion and available for any clarification and/or questions.

Information provided included:

- meeting the diverse needs within our student population and maintain support in the core required classes and technical programs to address the achievement gap
- increasing inclusion/co-teaching sections in order to lower the classroom ratios for students with disabilities and increase student support
- additional school psychologist to support evaluations, re-evaluations and specialized testing for all special education students
- worksite aides to accommodate increased number of post-graduate students and remain in compliance with student-teacher ratios for students with significant disabilities
- ELE instructors and paraprofessional to create balanced level teams for English Learners in order to strengthen their academic literacy and acquisition of the English language, strengthen the ability to embed literacy instructional strategies for all students, increase educator diversification; and creation of a program focused on EL students with low level literacy needs.

Superintendent Davis continued with her recommendation of the addition of a Director of Language Acquisition due to the increased numbers of ELE students, along with performance & compliance monitoring responsibilities. Mrs. Palladino was present during the discussion and provided detailed information to the committee as to her current day-to-day responsibilities and the need to separate the ELE Department from the current position. Committeeman Giggey noted his concern and inquired if there were other options available in place of this requested position.

Due to time constraints, the subcommittee requested an additional meeting to finish the proposed budget review and discussion.

The next Finance Sub-Committee meeting will be held on March 8, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Giggey to adjourn at 6:38 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3 Yes, 1 Absent (Mr. Sheehan)

Respectfully submitted,



Colette Edmonds
Recording Secretary