

Meeting of the Budget Sub-Committee (Committee of the Whole)
Budget Workshop
Tuesday, March 27, 2018

CRLS Attles Room
459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Called for the purpose of a Budget Workshop to review the FY 2019 Proposed Budget for the Cambridge Public Schools. There will be a presentation on the Family Engagement Budget Initiative during this Workshop.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini and Emily Dexter, Co-Chairs; Ms. Bowman, Ms. Kelly,
Mr. Kimbrough, Ms. Nolan and Mayor McGovern

Also Present: Dr. Salim, Superintendent; Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Ms. Spera, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Dr. Adams, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Ms. MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education; Dr. Likis, Chief Planning Officer; Ms. Spinner, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Maloney, Chief Operating Officer; Ms. Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources; Ms. Brazo, Welcoming Schools Coordinator; Ms. Rippey, Communications Manager; Ms. Liss, Educational Liaison to the Mayor

Co-Chair Emily Dexter in the Chair.

A quorum of the Sub-Committee (Committee of the Whole) being present, Emily called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Dexter read the call of the meeting and turned the meeting over to Dr. Salim, who stated he is excited to share the Family Engagement Budget Initiative with the Committee tonight. He explained what will be presented tonight and turned the rest of the meeting over to the presenters.

Family Engagement Budget Initiative

- Increased hours: Community Engagement Team (CET) support
- Increased hours: Elementary School Family Liaisons
- New positions: Upper School Community and Family Partnership Liaisons
- Increased allocation: Amigos Upper School

Ms. Brazo began with **Community Engagement Team (CET)** explaining that CET are partners that come to us through Human Services, since there has been an increase of schools sharing strategies with one another, CET have become more in demand. We are enlarging our contract with them for another 260 additional hours of outreach support to respond to more schools.

Ms. Brazo presented **Elementary School Family Liaisons** next: In 2014 a CPS Family Liaison Labor-Management Committee formed to explore the changing roles of the family liaisons. As schools expanded reciprocal family engagement and support advocacy of families expanded. Ms. Brazo explained MindMatters:

- Offered at 5 locations (10 two-hour sessions at each location)
- About 75 parents/caregivers enrolled across the city
- Four locations offering sessions in English and one offering sessions in Spanish
- Offered in partnership with Agenda for Children and Center for Families
- Taught by 9 liaisons, one CPS parent and staff from Agenda for Children and Center for Families
- Participants represent a cross-section of families from all 12 elementary schools.

Dr. Turk presented the new positions at the **Upper Schools: Community and Family Partnership Liaisons**

- Provide direct home outreach to families as needed
- Assist with family outreach for newly transitioning families during the school year

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- Provide additional support to families identified by teams/administration
- Organize family workshops, caregiver education classes/seminars
- Coordinate with community organizations/agencies to support student development and learning
- Work with district & city OST staff to ensure programming coordination

Dr. Turk explained that these positions will represent the supports of outreach to families, working around transitions of families both moving in and out of our schools, having workshops to talk about what happens in the lives of these students.

The presentation ended. Dr. Likis stated the presenters knew the Committee wanted them to keep it terse so there could be more talk on other budget issues.

The Chair opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Fantini asked if we are looking to put two way communication technology into the schools hands.

Ms. Rippey responded that there are some “two way” communications using phones, between students and teachers and families. There have been some meetings for texting technology; it is a lot more individualized, personalized, and effective to keep open communication going between teachers and families by texting. There is a need for a consistent and uniform way for parents of children at more than one school to communicate. Through a survey, the principals and liaisons have asked for this.

Ms. Bowman has a follow-up question on MindMatters, describing it as the companion to the Baby U model, are we approaching this as something for all parents or certain groups of parents?

Ms. Brazo informed the assembly that MindMatters is not modeled after Baby U; the way it is connected is that some of the people who facilitate the Baby U courses or teach the classes are also working with the MindMatters team. She added it is offered to every family in the district. They have a very interesting cross section of families.

Ms. Rippey added that the Liaisons say this is for everyone, it depends on what strategy works for whom. Some workshops draw people who live near the school instead of who goes to the school.

Mayor McGovern followed up on communication; if there is a dialogue of texting between teachers and parents, when are these dialogs happening. Some people really like to text and at 11:00 p.m. how many texts are reasonable.

Ms. Rippey stated that teachers would be required to give their personal cell phone numbers, which is not fair. They are looking at two designs; one is from the desk, whereas the text looks like it comes from a phone even though it really is coming from a desktop computer. The parent is required to download an app. The other design is that the parent’s text will go to the desktop. And the communication is stored in the computer for future reference.

Dr. Salim answered that they are building on and not replicating what already exists at the schools. They are continuing to support schools to match and develop the roles to meet the needs of all schools. He is excited about all schools being responsible for family engagement.

Vice Chair Kelly wants to also lift up the elementary family liaisons, she would like to know how the role has grown and changed over the past few years especially in family development.

Ms. Brazo responded that the work of family engagement belongs to everyone in the system. Family engagement and the liaisons role is that they are the experts and can facilitate that everyone does family engagement, including the teachers and the school clerks. Sharing high level expertise is a new thing.

Ms. Rippey shared that the principal is the voice of the school, but the liaison has to strategically think about how to get the info out to the homes.

Dr. Likis stated that they focus a lot on family liaison capacity building. They have had administrative council meetings focused on family engagement to partner and elevate the liaison voice, increase their interactions, and further their leadership in the district.

Ms. Nolan stated that she is glad this is moving forward. MindMatters is exciting for a lot of reasons, the students can benefit from it as well. She would like to tie this into technology. She is hoping we can have one point of contact. Can we tie ASPEN into this as an easy interface? She would like to go one place (ASPEN) and get everything that she needs.

Ms. Rippey stated that this question came up in the survey; parents need to learn how to use ASPEN. It is under used as a communication vehicle now because it is not known how to use it. There is help available if the parents contact the schools. It is on the administrations agenda to increase knowledge of how parents can navigate the different individual applications on the website and make it consistent and easy to use. If they use it enough, they will get used to it. ASPEN is not user friendly for parents. The question is how to make sure all levels of parents know how to use it. One of the goals in the budget is to make sure every teacher would have their own page, but people do not enjoy using it as much as the other tools.

Ms. Nolan stated in order to schedule PTA conferences, parents have to go to 3 separate sites to know what is going on with their children. When kids are in trouble, that information doesn't come from any of the three above mentioned sites. That is confusing for parents, herself included, and she considers herself relatively tech savvy. Does ASPEN have a translation for the immersion families? A lot of teachers do not update ASPEN, which makes it even more challenging to know their child's status.

Ms. Rippey stated that because of the district plan, the ed tech folks are looking at how to make sure families have information about grades and assignments, after that, the communication staff will look at how easy is it to use. CPSD needs more diverse means of communicating with families. All need to come to the same table in the same room and look at the technology together.

Mr. Fantini commented that on ASPEN some of our partners have access and some do not, it is very important that all have the same access in order to be equitable. Mr. Fantini also wanted to know if this team can see the family liaisons having a role in closing the achievement gap?

Ms. Brazo said yes the family liaisons are already participating in finding resources for families in many ways and they contribute to equity. She has heard from the liaisons that they want to focus on the students that are on the wrong side of the gap, but do not have the time.

Ms. Rippey said yes, please give them time and their participation will increase.

Dr. Likis stated they have the keenest sense of inequity in the district.

Emily stated that this topic cannot be stressed strongly enough, but they need to turn their attention to the 2019 Budget. The presentation ended at 6:45 p.m. Emily motioned for a 5 minutes recess.

The time for recess, having expired, the meeting resumed at 6:50 p.m. Emily began speaking on the 2019 Budget, explaining there were no discussions behind the scenes. She turned the next part of the meeting over to Dr. Salim.

Dr. Salim's opening remarks included the comments from the CEA unit advisory group, which included representatives from each school. He presented a very short version of the budget to that group and listened to feedback. There was appreciation around different needs, particularly at the younger ages. Another area that the Superintendent was encouraged to consider was from the instructional coaches; their concern is providing support, if the time does not exist during the normal school day. As we think about student support, where does that time reside in the schedule? These are difficult decisions. If students are being pulled out of a classroom, where do they go? Dr. Salim indicated Mr. Fantini was able to solicit questions from last Tuesday. There was a lot of testimony around computer science at the high school; they are reexamining that in RSTA and the math dept. There are other teachers that are capable to teach it, but are not currently teaching it. World Language, highlighted by Ms. Nolan, expanding language to grade 5 at the Morse and Peabody, will also continue in grade 4 at those two schools. He has spoken to the principals at those schools, and the instructional needs at the schools will be met. As for Kodaly, it will be expanded also, the concern continues around when to cram it into an already full schedule. There have been individual school requests; they are looking at the grade 4 cohort, Office of Student Services, not only at the Baldwin, but also at the Haggerty and the Amigos. Similarly, working with the principal at the Amigos, staffing has been increased in other areas to support the better needs of the school. They are looking at being prepared for unknown future problems. How they are going to use allocations to the elementary schools for reading recovery interventionists, literacy for math coaches was also discussed. They are considering all of those recommendations. Where is the most significant need at the 12 schools? They have mobilized the inclusion specialists and used them differently this year for students and families that are in crisis. There will be a full time social worker at Kennedy-Longfellow and a part time social worker at Graham and Parks. His last point is to try to continue to think about how we do the work in addition to how we spend our funds. We are adding 39 FTEs and there already are hundreds of existing FTE currently doing the work.

Emily opened the floor for discussion.

Vice-Chair Kelly returned to the case analysis trends. She appreciates the fact that they are not just targeting students with an IEP but all students.

Dr. Salim stated they are looking at the adjustment counselors and noticing at some schools the needs are greater. Some of the significant needs are taking place with our younger students; this is not just in Cambridge, no-one has solved this nationally. This can be for many reasons, we need to be able to provide services and make sure we are supporting students. The administration has a standing meeting every month; they meet with different staff from across the district, to figure out how to provide support differently. This is how using an inclusion specialist first began. They all recognize this is hard work.

Mr. Fantini would like to see some potential changes in the budget. He is excited to hear that his leadership team has already been out there working with people, solving problems. If we are going to close the achievement gap, this may be a new way to do it. The middle school math discussion last night was good and positive. He would like to see \$5,000.00 go to tutoring plus. Beyond the 4th Wall should be put back into the partners group. The Kodaly program needs one more position $\frac{3}{4}$ of our schools have it so one more would be nice. He would like to know how the HSEP is going, what progress is happening. Computer Science program, the parents and the teachers made the case so we need to move it forward. It is an employable skill.

Ms. Nolan stated she appreciates the updates and the work going on to resolve computer science, she would like to see one computer science teacher. There is a move across the district to make sure all students have this skill. How is the social work allocation equitable? The budget says that we are adding three more workers that are shared between six elementary schools; which means that four schools don't have support.

Dr. Salim stated they are looking at individual student counseling needs. The social worker allocations are based not just on the case analysis but also from different situations.

Ms. Kelly brought up the high school, stating it would help to get something from the administration to see how the roles work together and how they sometimes overlap.

Mayor McGovern has a chart from Ms. Liss, his educational liaison, that is quite nice and everyone wants one. He can see that every school has an adjustment counselor and a psychologist. Not all schools have social workers. He understands that it is everybody's job but all are not all trained.

Ms. MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, explained social worker support. The schools look different, true; it does not make them inequitable. The schools look the way they do because this was done at the request of the principal and the teams at those schools. The needs of our schools are different. Sometimes there is no case load. Their job is to work with the team. Schools choose different frameworks and different programs. They go school by school, to differentiate needed supports based on the needs at individual schools. Seven schools will have a social worker. Five schools: the Amigos, Cambridgeport, Fletcher/Maynard, Tobin and Peabody schools will not have a social worker. In the future, they will consider working with those schools. She informed the assembly it is hard to put into writing how those decisions are made. They look at each school, individually. Alice Cohen does amazing work and is spread very thin – she will look at the schools to know where support is needed. There is a bucket in case of a meltdown and we can draw from it.

Ms. Spinner stated when they began to add the social workers to the schools, it was not done in the same manner as special education staff was added. She tried to clarify the full time psychologist and full time school adjustment counselor that exist in every building. The .2 comes out of special education.

Ms. MacDonald added that when they were deciding which schools got social workers, it was done with her, Ms. Spera and Ms. Spinner. Any school that has a point 5 social worker, will be networking across the district and be part of a team. It is a general ed position, they don't want to create another silo.

Emily stated that she feels it does need to be rolled out to all schools. Their first priority by law has to be for special ed. The social workers are trained to be social workers and it may not be that they are trained in OSS. Why not put them in now.

Dr. Salim does not want there to be any confusion around what the roles are for the adjustment counselors. This support eases their role; not take over the prevention work, they are part of a team. He added this process has also included the principals.

Ms. Nolan followed up with the fact that special ed allocations are very different. Amigos School is the only school in the district with 10 levels and it is hard to allocate. It is too hard to coordinate 10 different schedules. She also mentioned that students leave amigos because the schedule is too difficult.

Ms. Bowman stated that she is okay with the approach the district is taking, if social workers are put in every school, and are not needed in a particular school, they may start putting children of color in categories they don't belong in, which can lead to unintended consequences. Students of color will be marginalized for behavior. She is curious as to how we provide for kids that are participating in sports, when they are traveling, what foods are supplied by CPS?

Mayor McGovern was told that parents are being asked to provide food for freshman JV and Varsity teams. The estimate is about \$200.00 per family. All families cannot afford to pay.

Dr. Salim explained this is not demonstrated as a line item. Ms. Bowman wants to know if we can include it in the budget for this year.

Ms. Bowman also wants to know about future budgets, what is our rubric? Whoever shows up to influence the budget at the end of the process wins, and that is highly problematic for her. What about those without a voice?

Mr. Kimbrough stated that there have been many guidance staffing emails. He brought up the fact that Ms. Gray did a presentation on a new model for guidance. The case loads and students are continuing to rise; there are no additional counselors, he is looking for an understanding of what will help moving forward.

Dr. Salim said there was one more guidance counselor added, for a total of 9 counselors at CRLS. There is a new model that is part of a longer delivery model plan.

Mr. Kimbrough would also like to know about Chandra Banks and Restorative Justice program, can you add more supports to her role?

Dr. Salim asked Dr. Turk to speak to this issue.

Dr. Turk stated that a few things have changed over the last few years; the district appreciates the work that Chandra Banks does. Her role, in the past, was focused only on the high school. She now works with the whole district, including principals and coordinators. Grades K through 12 are asking for her services. Ms. Banks has trained staff to be part of the training for restorative justice. The other important piece is not to think of this as work only done by one person; Melody Brazo, Alice Cohen, Kim De Andrade and Rosalie Rippey are working on mediating conflicts with Ms. Banks as an informal team.

Mayor McGovern reflected back on peer mediation in the middle schools; stating he enjoyed mediating on the playground etc. He wondered if that is still in place.

Dr. Turk responded that the strongest mediators are at the high school and Ms. Banks works with interns from Harvard to do this work.

Emily wants to know what will be done about the early grades. She asked if what we are doing with the budget is credible and stated that \$27,000.00 per student is a lot of money, adding staff to central administration may be too top heavy and may need to be reviewed. Are we partnering with the educators? We have not bridged the gap; the guidance counselors stated the review did not support or represent their views. The elementary schools say the administration does not reflect their needs. She worries about the CEA views not being supported. She is also concerned about the amount of RTI that is accomplished off of the books. Emily made it known that she is not happy with SEL and math.

Emily passed out a proposed CPS Budget Revisions FY 19 document, (on file in the School Committee office). She has the feeling that there will not be enough teachers at the high school. They need a marketing campaign around the lottery in kindergarten. She would love to see our tech partners in Kendal square donate hardware. The Department of Human Services should do more cost sharing with CPS. She wants to pull back on some of the central office costs.

Mayor McGovern commented that the Department of Human Services does a lot more than what is on the chart provided by Emily. It was brought up that a can of worms can be opened with this. The Money is only being shifted back to the city, it is not a saving.

Ms. Nolan appreciates all of this work, they are all good ideas. We cannot do all of this for next year. She really likes the math. She is concerned about what we have already taken on. Ms. Nolan feels this is a good list to keep. She is grateful that this budget does reflect what was asked for by the community.

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We have listened, the administration listened and it is our job to decide whether or not it is an important enough need to put into the budget. We are better when we hear from a range of people.

Vice Chair Kelly stated it is an interesting list, but we are at the end of the process, one of the strengths we are operating with is the CPS entry plan, then the strategic plan and then the outcomes. She appreciates the information that the staff has shared with us. Kodaly music program improves math, elementary math is a struggle everywhere. Not all the schools are the same or have the same emphasis.

Ms. Bowman also appreciates the list by Emily adding that being able to see possible cuts is good; however she wants the Committee to be mindful that a lot of declarative statements have been made that do not reflect everyone. Ms. Bowman wants this body to let the Superintendent do this job; this is a part of the job we hired him for. We need to agree to respectfully disagree with each other. She appreciates some of the cuts on Ms. Dexter's chart; however, we need to work on the cuts together. All additions need to be connected to the framework to close the gaps; otherwise we are just throwing more money at a problem.

Ms. Kelly motioned, Mayor McGovern seconded to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

Dosha E. Beard
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Distributed Back-up Documents/Handouts: (copies on file in the School Committee office)

- **FY 19 Budget Initiative: Family Engagement** Strategic Objective 4: Expand and Strengthen Family and community Partnerships
- Proposed CPS Budget Revisions FY 19 (Emily Dexter)

Email communications received:

- Lauren Gibbs
- Janani Nathan
- Belinda Watt

Letter:

- Letter signed by the Members of CRLS Guidance

The communications are on file in the Office of the Executive Secretary to the School Committee and can be viewed.