

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2020

Present: Ms. Catherine Bowen, Secretary
Ms. Amy Checkoway
Mr. Michael Crowley
Ms. Tara Donner
Ms. Evelyn Gomez
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations
Mr. Michael McAllister, Director of Human Capital

Absent: Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Chair

1. Opening Business

1.1 Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. Impact of School Opening of FY21 Budget

Superintendent Phelan thanked the Committee for their feedback at the August 25 meeting.

Superintendent Phelan explained the two documents forwarded to the Committee this morning (“FY21 FDK COSTS ANALYSIS 2020-08-26 provided by DESE” and “FY21 School Opening Expenses rev 2020-08-26”). The document (FDK) document provides an explanation of the long-term budget impact. The second document (School Opening) presents updates on the estimated costs for remote and hybrid learning operations. The district has tried to maximize in cooperation with the Town Administration, the federal COVID-related grants that have been received and will keep the Town Administration and Select Board up to date on the changing costs. The School Committee discussed related budget priorities including, retaining staff for out-years and potential positions changes and needs.

3. Full Day Kindergarten Fees

Superintendent Phelan stated the district is in a position to have the student Kindergarten student-count be supported at a higher level via Chapter 70 state funding. Due to this unique budget year, there are additional dollars in the operating budget that would enable the district to waive the Full Day Kindergarten fee for 2020-21, and subsequently receive additional funding via Chapter 70 the following year.


Anthony DiCologero, Director of Business, Finance and Operations presented a chart (“FY21 FDK COSTS ANALYSIS 2020-08-26 provided by DESE”) to explain how the financial numbers would look with Full Day Kindergarten fees and without fees.

School Committee members expressed favorability with the no fee option citing the educational benefits for full-day kindergarten for all students, the relief of fees for a population of families going forward, and for supporting the education budget with corresponding state funds. A School Committee member asked where the funding would come from to cover the cost of Full Day Kindergarten for 2020-21. The funds would come from the cost differential between staff resigning/retiring and new staff being hired at a lower salary rate. That amount is usually between \$100,000 and \$300,000. Superintendent Phelan stated the district also has the support of the Town to bridge the gap. The state would expect that the Town be able to appropriate the historically proportional funding (Net School Spending) to support the program equitably with the other grade levels programming.

Superintendent Phelan stated he is asking the School Committee to consider for a vote at the September 1 School Committee meeting, to waive the policy of charging a fee for Full Day Kindergarten. Members affirmed their support to consider this vote.

4. Adjourn

On a motion offered by Catherine Bowen and seconded by Tara Donner, the School Committee VOTED unanimously on a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by 
Catherine Bowen, Secretary