

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE JOINT MEETING WITH  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
REMOTE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 30, 2021

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

Present: Mike Crowley, FSC Chair  
Jamal Saeh  
John Phelan, Superintendent  
Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

DATE: January 20, 2022  
TIME: 9:07 AM

Absent: Meghan Moriarty

Call to Order at 8:02

The agenda was amended to focus only on building-based needs.

The staff exchange has yielded a reduction in the first quarter budget by ~\$797,221. The bulk of the staff exchange saving (~\$406K) was from Chenery Middle School. The Finance subcommittee encouraged the district to explore how re-allocating some of the savings can meet the emerging needs of students. The Superintendent presented a collated summary based on the building-based needs collected from the BPS principals. A summary for each position was provided and included in the accompanying presentation. Finance provided a preliminary estimate for the requested resource.

#### **Belmont High School**

The principals resource request included 1.0 FTE campus security, 1 FTE social worker, 1.0 FTE Campus monitor (Unit D) and additional hours for admin assistant and detention stipend. The addition of 3FTEs requires reallocating ~\$103K from GF.

#### **Chenery Middle School**

The principals requested additional support for class coverage (6 Unit D FTEs). These are positions that have previously been prioritized from existing ESSER funds, but the district has not been able to fill these positions to date. Additional Math specialist (1.4 FTE) are needed to help with academic recovery. Additional Reading Specialists are needed to assist in non-fictional studies. The addition of 0.2 FTE for EL can provide additional services for middle school and pre-school and is an efficient use of resource that maximizes student services. Adding 0.2 FTEs for music can help support student learning in large classes. An additional social worker can help support the MTSS work for each grade. The total FTE request was 4.4 FTEs from GF (\$204,400), and 6 from existing ESSER fund (\$144,000).

#### **Elementary schools:**

The principals requested an increase in guidance counselor (0.6FTE), professional aid (1FTE), building subs (2FTEs) reading specialists (0.1FTE) and math specialist (2FTEs). A total estimated increase of \$198.5k for 5.7FTE, \$48K will be aligned to existing ESSER fund, and remaining \$150.5K from GF.

Additional 2FTEs BCBA specialists were requested for Butler and Wellington to help students regulate their behaviors and support staff in communication with families, a mindfulness coach to support students experiencing increased anxiety in the classroom, a teacher and program director to support to the Boston based students who are struggling with the transition to school. The budget for these FTEs was not provided.

**Discussion:**

With the increase demand and allocation of resource to hiring of social workers, subcommittee members advised that we are clear in presenting these roles how social workers are being utilized, the caseloads, and expected outcomes (improvement over previous year), and where the intersection of parental duties vs school responsibilities.

Additionally, it is important to understand how many of these roles are a response to the pandemic, and how many are foundational needs that we would expect to be part of the resource allocation for BPS. If the latter, we need more data to support that vision.

Superintendent highlighted that some of the social workers staff will be needed next year, the MTSS structure will remain next year, and this is in addition to the existing social workers.

There was discussion about the need to clarify what changed this year that necessitated adding a security person in HS. The superintendent explained that there is an increase needs for a security person given the disruptions we've seen lately, and that the school building is open well into evening.

The committee members asked if we can be creative about resource allocation if we separated the need between 3-6pm vs 6pm-close. For example, how does the SRO presence help in the afterschool activity, and can late afternoon/evening hours be covered through extra fees collected from extracurriculars/rentals?

Unit D is an emerging need, we should consider every effort to incentivize staffing even if it means increasing the compensation.

The committee members asked for more clarity on the additional need for EL FTEs at this time. The superintendent highlighted that there are an additional 30 EL learners that we have since October, and there were additional mandated services for pre-school.

**Citizens Concern:**

- *Lisa Pargoli*  
*Expressed concern of focusing too much on social emotional learning and advocated for more effort be spent on foundational education. She also requested clarity on the number of students needing support for math and reading vs EL. She strongly recommended that the district not hire a mindfulness coach.*

Superintendent Phelan explained that we have never had the math specialist support at the elementary level, but the role was always needed. He also highlighted that there is an increased number of students on IEPs, and we need reading interventions, that these students are not meeting benchmarks and need support.

- *Anne Helgen*  
*Which of these costs are being charged to the revolving balance?*  
*Would it be cheaper to hire an outside security resource?*  
*How does reduction in enrollment balance the demand for the addition of FTEs?*  
*Wanted more clarity and definition of what each person does, especially social workers.*
- *Bill Anderson*  
*Wanted to review the presentation and wanted to make sure it is posted online.*
- *Jane Shapiro*  
*Indicated that she has volunteered at Burbank for 14 years and wanted to know how she can help.*

Superintendent Phelan thanked her for her volunteer work and indicated that multiple opportunities exist and to reach out to the principals.

**Action:**

1. The subcommittee requested more data to understand the number of students that are served by the math and reading specialists as well as the additional social workers, including more clarity on the current gap and anticipated outcome measures. Data is pending.
2. School Administration to provide recommendation on the level of spend that balances the current needs with the unknown financial need for the remaining of the year.
3. School Administration to explore any efficiencies gained by the reduction in enrollment
4. School Administration to provide more clarity on the sources of funding especially the revolving accounts
5. Post Building Based Need document online

Meeting adjourned at 9:20am

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Michael F. Crowley