

**MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
CENTRAL OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
JUNE 11, 2019
4:00 P.M.**

Present: Maro Hogan, Mary Brannelly, Lydia Clancy, Bethlyn Houlihan-Absent

The meeting was called or order at 4:02 p.m.

Budget Discussion

Dr. Gerardi identified an increase in Special Education related expenses and the group needed to address the additional \$54K reduction in our budget.

In previous budget discussions, we identified that we would rather reduce our budget due to attrition than layoff. One consideration was to reduce the number of 1st grade sections from 6 sections to 5 sections which would increase the class sizes from 17 per class in 6 sections to 21 per class in 5 sections. Also discussed was Fowler sports.

We reduced the music program from three to two and we had an open position at Green Meadow. We talked about class size and identified recently it wasn't just strings and chorus but small group instruction was also impacted. Also students had band twice a week and the small group instruction was discussed.

Small group instruction has been an on-going discussion where specialists have students pulled out of their classes.

Scheduling small groups is a challenge. We looked at strings after school. The inexpensive way was is to have before school and first period instruction.

Ms. Brannelly said instrumental and band lessons can be done before school. Mr. Barth said 4th grade can have a private person for lessons and make it a specialist class during first period.

Mr. Barth said 1st period is a special first block; band one day; lesson the next; health; engineering or computer science can follow another week. Normally Fowler students take all the specials and now it can be an elective.

Ms. Hogan said if they are having this for 4th grade, what does it do for the rest of the school?

Mr. Barth said we can have Grades 5 and 6 before school; there are lots of opportunities before school. Also, there are students this year not taking health or Physical Education because of small group instruction.

The committee talked about reducing grade one down a section or reducing special education paraprofessionals.

Ms. Gahan said we budget in September. She does the out-of-district first. There are two budget lines; one is the collaborative and one is private special education schools. Both serve students with IEP's. Every student is put in and we don't know what the rate will be. The collaborative can be 3% - 4% increase. It has been about 2% every year. One of our students came into town that was in a residential program for \$100K and the cost went to \$125K in one year with reconstructive costs.

Back in November, we had 13 collaborative programs with \$908K in cost. Now we are at 12 programs with a cost of \$740K.

In November, for the private programs, it was 16 students for \$1,790M, now we are 19 and are cost sharing. We are now at \$1,973M.

Ms. Resendes said it is also the transportation cost for 28 students with an average \$25-\$50K depending where they go. There are also those that go out-of-district.

The committee brainstormed other options.

Ms. Brannelly: Does it make more sense to reduce a 2nd or 3rd grade? They have more sections.

Ms. Clancy: Can we eliminate Ms. Gaudet's position? The curriculum principals can do the work.

Dr. Gerardi said we have looked at administrative reductions every year.

Ms. Clancy said that the Kindergarten students had a hard year and they are behind in their skills.

Ms. Resendes said the projection for next year is 20 students per class.

Ms. Lawton said the present Kindergarten class is behind. They don't have classroom aides and there is no literacy person next year.

Ms. Brannelly asked if there was any way to decrease Fowler classes.

Dr. Gerardi said the schedule is different at Fowler and we have passed the deadline for layoffs.

Ms. Hogan asked how many are in the Spanish Immersion classes. There are 25 going into first grade they are at 23 now.

Ms. Resendes asked if we reduced the section is there was another way to support the students?

Ms. Fioretti said we want the students to be at DRA level 6 in first grade and they are at a 3 right now.

Ms. Clancy said there is legislation now regarding dyslexia and we need to do screenings.

Ms. Gahan said that DESE hasn't decided what that needs to look like right now. In our Kindergarten screenings, we cover components of dyslexia.

Ms. Brannelly said looking back, are there other positions we can look at to see if we can draw from those?

Dr. Gerardi said we have looked at paraprofessionals; secretaries and custodian positions.

Dr. Gerardi talked about filling two administrative roles at GM. We could look at one doing two buildings again.

Ms. Hogan asked how Mr. Barth felt about that.

Mr. Barth felt he would be unsuccessful in that role. Mr. Costello and Mr. Barth have had an amazing year at Fowler and it would be like going backwards. Fowler had a great year.

Ms. Brannelly asked what about Pre-K?

Ms. Resendes said PK is covered by both grants and tuition.

Ms. Hogan asked where the kindergarten projections are from. The class size of 125 for Kindergarten were projections from the Town and also the recent Kindergarten registration.

Ms. Lawton said if you have the right person there as assistant principal, it would be different.

Ms. Resendes asked what about a retired person like Dr. Gobron.

Ms. Lawton said we need to come back together as a team.

Ms. Fioretti said someone strong would work.

Ms. Lawton asked if you would do an interim position, then you could assess if it worked.

Dr. Gerardi said we would need to explore that with the screening committee.

Ms. Gahan said that the administrative model at Green Meadow in the time she has been here has worked and has strong teachers and paraprofessionals. We have had people leaving us, and if you go with the current model, it is a lot of work to get the observations and write ups done and have the appropriate conversations with teachers, early in the year if you are a part-time person. Green Meadow is struggling with a lot. One issue being building health. On a daily basis there is shuffling of people so all students have adults in the room. We have behaviors in the building. Green Meadow needs a team like Fowler. The students are suffering and students are going out-of-district. The numbers of restraints we have are reduced, but not where we need to be. We need stability. We need to increase MCAS scores. That is part of why we did the model we have.

Ms. Brannelly said we need a full time curriculum person.

Ms. Gahan agreed we should not be cutting the 1st grade position.

Ms. Resendes asked if we did a part-time person, can someone help with evaluations.

A parent asked what are the numbers you are looking at if you didn't want to reduce the teachers? Ms. Resendes said \$66K.

A parent said that the Green Meadow students are our foundation. By the time they get to Fowler, the students will be different. Let's save the students now. Rather than cutting, is there any department that can save \$66K for one year until this gets under control?

Mr. Costello said that the interim and part-time positions at Green Meadow are concerning. We are here and working more than full-time now. If we bring in an interim and a part-time person, are we addressing the fundamental issues? It takes a commitment.

A parent asked if we not getting people because of the recent news about Green Meadow.

Dr. Gerardi answered that we are moving forward. This news has not helped as far as hiring right now.

The best possible choice would be someone who wants to be there and get the job done. Not an interim. If we do have an interim, we should start in January 2020 to look for a permanent Principal.

Ms. Brannelly made a motion to take the first grade from 6 sections to 5 sections. Also, to work hard to get back to 6 sections for the next school year. 2nd by Ms. Hogan.

Ms. Brannelly asked about Fowler sports. Last year we increased the fee. The answer is: it would not come up to \$54K.

Ms. Lawton asked if the co-teaching class is effective. Ms. Gahan said this was the first year we did the co-teaching. Next year, we agreed that the Grade 1 Special Education teacher would be a Wilson certified person. She would provide pull out services. Two teachers going into co-teaching would have time for Wilson groups at the end of the day. We would need the position of the person who resigned for next year.

Ms. Gahan said our current 2nd and 3rd grades are big cohorts as far as special needs go. We are not adding another special education teacher for co-teaching.

Mr. Costello asked what if a full-time principal is hired soon and a 2nd administrator is hired after October. That person can be brought in less than full-time.

Mr. Costello said if we hired a half-time principal in January 2020, the administrative team could help, this could save money.

Ms. Brannelly supports the recommendation for one Principal in the fall and one in January.

Ms. Clancy supports this over cutting a first grade teacher.

Ms. Ditto said there is no good choice. We have to make a hard choice. We are in a bad position.

Mr. Costello felt that the leadership team can help Green Meadow this summer. The Fowler team wants to help and mentor in the fall.

Ms. Latron said the glue that kept the building together was the teachers.

Ms. Hogan made a motion to reduce the sections in grade 1. The motion did not pass 0-3.

Ms. Clancy made a motion to hire one full-time principal with a TBD title for Green Meadow ASAP; and a second principal at .5 to start in November or a .75 to start in January.

Discussion: This position would have to be the Principal for Leadership and Operations. Ms. Gahan can help goal setting with the special education teachers. Ms. Gaudet could do certain grade levels and Fowler and do others to set goals and start the process.

The motion passed 3-0 in favor.

Mr. Barth discussed the band problem and the schedule for next year.

With a better schedule next year, we need to look at the paraprofessionals. Mr. Barth replied to every email about the music program. We lost a music teacher at Fowler and still gave 515 students music and band. Mr. Kozik also has to go to the High School next year.

We are looking at a (.2) addition to fully restore instrumental lessons for grades 4 and 5 and offer a before school chorus program for any student who chooses it.

Citizen's Comments

None

Member's Comments

Ms. Clancy and Ms. Brannelly spent some time MHS talking to the staff and they are feeling the cuts. The students are not walking out of the high school with the education that previous students had.

Some teachers feel that the new Tyler System at MHS is a problem.

Ms. Resendes said this system is widely used across the US; and yes, it is just coming into MA. The teachers felt they were not getting adequate training.

Ms. Hogan said as a parent it is a little work to get through the new system.

A motion was made by Ms. Brannelly to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 p.m. 2nd by Ms. Clancy. The motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Moore

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools

Approved by School Committee Vote on 6/20/19