

Pond Cove School
2020-2021 Budget Questions and Answers
February 25, 2020

Please provide current and projected class size data. Please specify actual numbers per classroom, not just the average.

Current	Projected
Kindergarten: 17,16,16,16,15,16	Kindergarten: 17,17,17,17,16,16
Grade 1: 18,19,18,19,19,19	Grade 1: 17,16,16,16,15,16
Grade 2: 18,19,19,19,18	Grade 2: 18,19,18,19,19,19
Grade 3: 19, 19, 20,19,16,19	Grade 3: 18,19,19,19,18
Grade 4: 21,20,21,21,22	Grade 4: 19,19,20,19,16,19

How many social workers work at Pond Cove currently?

1.4 FTE

Can you describe to us why a second school counselor is necessary. Also, why a counselor vs a social worker. How would the current guidance counselors role change? Could a part time guidance counselor fulfill the needs identified? If this position is added what tools will be used to identify if it is successful?

The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of 250 students per school counselor. Pond Cove has one school counselor attempting to serve 525 students.

An additional school counselor would mean that.....

- More students would have access to focused Tier II counseling supports. More small groups could take place that focus on coping strategies, identifying and working through worry, making and maintaining social connections, increasing expected school behavior. More individual students could benefit from check ins and one-on-one counseling for social, emotional, and academic needs. **Currently many students who could benefit from regular time with the school counselor or from a counseling group are not being seen, being seen inconsistently, or needing to wait weeks for an opening.**

- Quicker access to a school counselor when needed. Currently students often have to wait to meet with our school counselor when they are struggling at school.
- More responsiveness and communication with teachers and parents. An additional school counselor would allow for more time to follow up and check in with parents and teachers about student progress and needs.
- With less classrooms to serve, each school counselor could work more closely with the classrooms, teachers, and students on their caseload. This would mean more opportunities to model best practices in social emotional learning for teachers. School counselors would have more time to collaborate with teachers and help ensure that social emotional learning continues outside of the Guidance curriculum.
- Less time being pulled away from proactive services.
- More consistency of services. Currently our school counselor is being pulled from groups, lessons, and scheduled individuals when issues or crises occur.

An additional full time school counselor:

- One counselor would take grades K-1 and the other would take 3-4. 2nd grade could be split between the two or one counselor takes 2nd and the other counselor takes on more schoolwide responsibilities.
- Each counselor would be responsible for running a full school counseling program, in coordination with each other, within their grade levels. Each counselor would teach lessons, run groups, see individuals, consult with teachers and parents, collaborate with all stake-holders, help with referrals, and participate in school wide Peaceful Pond Cove work.

The Essential Role of the Elementary School Counselor:

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Careers-Roles/WhyElem.pdf>

Information about Student to School Counselor Ratios:

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Publications/ASCAEdTrustRHFactSheet.pdf>

Information about school counselor effectiveness:

<https://schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/careers-roles/effectiveness-of-school-counseling>

Info from ASCA about the role of Elementary School Counselors:

The ASCA National Model provides a flexible framework elementary school counselors use to develop a school counseling program designed to meet their students' unique needs. The delivery of this program includes:

Direct student services including:

- *Instruction – teaching the school counseling curriculum to students focused through the lens of selected student standards from the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success.*
- *Appraisal and advisement – assessing student abilities, interests and achievement to help them make decisions about their future.*
- *Counseling – providing professional assistance and support to a student or small group of students during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change or other situations impeding student success. School counselors do not provide therapy or long-term counseling in schools. However, school counselors are prepared to recognize and respond to student mental health needs and assist students and families seeking resources.*

Indirect student services including:

- *Consultation – share strategies supporting student achievement with parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations*
- *Collaboration – work with other educators, parents and the community to support student achievement*
- *Referrals – support for students and families to school or community resources for additional assistance and information*

American School Counselor Association recommends a 1 to 2:50 ratio.

School	Grade Levels	School Counselor/Student Ratio
Pond Cove Elementary	K-4 518 students & 1 SC	1 to 518
Falmouth Elementary	K-5 860 students and 3 SCs	1 to 286
Brown School South Portland	K-5 250 students & 1SC	1 to 250
Dyer School South Portland	K-5 238 students & 1SC	1 to 238

Kaler South Portland	K-5 226 students & 1SC	1 to 226
Skillin South Portland	K-5 384 students & 1SC	1 to 379
Small South Portland	K- 5 305 students & 1SC	1 to 305
Mabel I Wilson	K-3 576 students & 2 SCs	1 to 288
Rowe School Yarmouth	K-1 198 students & .7 SC	.7 to 198
Yarmouth Elementary	2-4 354 students & 1 SC	1 to 354

Can you describe to us why a second school counselor is necessary?

Our school counselor to student ratio is more than twice that of the recommended ratio and is significantly higher than surrounding elementary schools. Our school counselor is attempting to run a comprehensive school counseling program

(<https://meschoolcounselor.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/maine-school-comp-model>) that serves all students but is spread too thin to provide the kind of depth and breadth that Pond Cove Students deserve.

Because of the high number of students being served by one school counselor many students who could benefit from regular time with the school counselor or from a counseling group are not being seen, being seen inconsistently, or needing to wait weeks for an opening. Our school counselor is frequently pulled from groups, lessons, and scheduled individuals when issues or crises occur. One of the major goals of a school counseling program should be to be proactive, giving students the skills they need before problems arise, but the proactive pieces of the school counseling program suffer when the school counselor has too many students and classrooms to serve.

Also, why a counselor vs a social worker.

School counselors serve all students and are trained to work closely with teachers and parents to help students build social emotional skills.

School counselors help with all Tiers of support. Tier I- helping teachers build classroom environments that are conducive to learning and positive relationships, Tier II- providing short-term support to students who are struggling, Tier III- individual support to build skills in students who continue to struggle and might need longer term social work support.

How would the current guidance counselors role change?

An additional full time school counselor:

- *One counselor would take grades K-1 and the other would take 3-4. 2nd grade could be split between the two or one counselor takes 2nd and the other counselor takes on more schoolwide responsibilities.*
- *Each counselor would be responsible for running a full school counseling program, in coordination with each other, within their grade levels. Each counselor would teach lessons, run groups, see individuals, consult with teachers and parents, collaborate with all stake-holders, help with referrals, and participate in school wide Peaceful Pond Cove work.*

Could a part time guidance counselor fulfill the needs identified?

A part time school counselor would not allow the depth of services, collaboration, and consistent follow up that another full-time counselor could provide. If a ½ time counselor was added it would allow for more Tier II services (short term small group and individual work) but it would not ensure that all students get better access to a high quality and comprehensive counseling program.

If this position is added what tools will be used to identify if it is successful?

- Using American School Counselor standards to ensure our program is competitive with the best programs in the country (RAMP distinction) [RAMP Model Program](#)
- Data regarding students served and pre/post surveys to measure impact
- Needs Assessments and follow up to ensure student needs are being met
- Feedback from teachers and parents regarding collaboration (evening sessions with parents, PD for teachers about social emotional learning and in classroom role-modeling)

What other local school departments have a “permanent substitute” in their budget? Is that position tied to just one school?

I will do my best to provide information regarding other school departments as soon as possible.

The position would just be tied to one school.

Is there a higher degree of absenteeism among Pond Cove staff than at the middle school and high school? Please provide data on how often during the last school year and current school year that Pond Cove has needed substitutes for teachers.

Filled Substitute Days 9/3/2019-2/24/2020 (98 school days)	407
Unfilled Substitute Positions 9/3/2019-2/24/2020 (98 school days)	135

I have requested substitute data for the 2018-2019 school year from our HR department.

What would the “permanent substitute” do on days when no teacher is absent?

As you can see from the above data, a permanent sub would be very busy. If it happened that there was no assignment, we could share with another school.

How does the permanent substitute position compare to the cost of daily subs? What is our daily rate for subs?

Daily Sub Rate = \$90.00/day

The total cost of Permanent Sub with benefits would be: \$67,995

Only 2 cafeteria support aides were hired for this year. What are the anticipated additional benefits of 2 more aides? What additional strategies would be utilized to attract 4 total if the budget supports that?

The addition of 2 more cafeteria support aides would result in more planning time for teachers and increase consistency in the cafeteria. RTI ed techs would also have fewer duties, allowing for more reading and math intervention services.

In order to attract more applicants I would explore additional advertising options. I would also attempt to recruit parents and other community members.

With regards to the two unfilled Cafeteria Support Aides at Pond Cove, have we tried advertising for those positions outside of School Spring and other conventional school staffing mediums?

No.

My understanding is that when we started introducing world language to the lower grades several years ago this was accomplished by reducing the number of times per week that pond cove students met with foreign language teachers. If this is the case, how do the foreign language teachers evaluate the change? Does this sufficiently support our goals in world language and new strategic goals around global competency?

Do we have an update on the student who needed a 504 ed tech this year? Do they still need the 504 ed tech next year?

At this time it's looking like we will need this ed tech. This is a 504 team decision and the needs are continuously assessed. The goal is for the child to access education without this support.

What tools are being used to identify that the health and wellness position is being successful and should be increased to 1.0?

Kindergarten and Grade 1 Health & Wellness
Pond Cove School
February 25, 2020

To date, K and 1 students have participated in a total of 16 Health & Wellness lessons.

Kindergarten Learning Targets

1. With occasional guidance, demonstrate effective coping strategies to manage emotions, think flexibly and be cooperative.
2. With occasional guidance, use body and voice control while participating in grade-level appropriate physical movement and games.

Grade 1 Learning Targets

1. Independently demonstrate effective coping strategies to manage emotions, think

- flexibly and be cooperative.
2. Use body and voice control while participating in grade-level appropriate physical movement and games.

Tools and Methods Used to Measure Student Improvement, Success and Learning Target Attainment

A. Tools: Stopwatch, Game Equipment, Gel Timers, Fidget Spinners, Yoga Mats, Balance Cushions, Mindfulness Movement, Breathing Ball (Sphere) to focus on breath, Observational (Notes from lesson to lesson)

B. Methods:

- Safe Space Body Check
- Student-led Demonstrations of an activity, role play, use of equipment
- Student Co-Leaders
- Five-Ten Second Wiggle Room (Opportunity for self-directed change in behaviors that support individual, whole group learning and participation)
- Student Reflection (Individual, Whole Group)
- Tally Keepers (Student volunteers who chart the number of times lesson stops due to unproductive behavior)

C. Evidence and Outcomes:

- Reduced time needed for transitions
- Reduced frequency of teacher support or intervention
- Reduced number of tallies with zero tallies as the target
- Reduced use of “No Thank You, Pass” option
- Increased use of Language that supports Learning, Kindness and Community Building
- Increased use of Habits of Work
- Increased Volunteering
- Increased use of self-directed shift from “Rock Brain” to “Flex Brain” with a positive outcome
- Increased Physical Activity (structured, unstructured) both indoors and outdoors during the school day

- Consistent Safe and Proper use of equipment
- Unsolicited Student Feedback regarding their use of Mindfulness, Healthy Eating and Physical Activity both in and out of school
- 5210 Booklet Design

Jason/Perry/Noel: Noted in the Facilities / CIP project list for FY21 is a whiteboard installation project at Pond Cove. This is listed as replacing chalk boards and SmartBoards. Not that long ago SmartBoards were a new proposal and were expensive purchases. Are these pieces of technology no longer working? No longer useful? How are we carefully planning for the future so that we have the right kind of “boards” for our classrooms and not making costly purchases that don’t work out?

I have suggested holding off on this project until we know more about the building committee’s plan for Pond Cove. I will defer to Perry and Noel regarding the latest technology options.

In your proposed CIP for FY21, at Pond Cove you list the “Creation of a new office space on the second floor”. Is that for the proposed second guidance counselor?

We are in need of spaces for multiple purposes: RTI intervention space, school psychologist space, possible new counselor space.