

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019

6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
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Barbara K. Fookes
TOWN CLERK

Present: Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mrs. Kremmel, Mr. Foote, Mr. Bourbonniere, Mr. Elsaghir, Mr. Foote, and Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

Others Present: Dr. Semmel, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Hendrickson Business Manager, Mrs. Parsons, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mrs. Trinks, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Education Services, Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology and Principals.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

3. Budget Workshop #2 for 2019 – 2020 Budget

Dr. Semmel – Tonight we will be reviewing the remainder of the organizational portion of the 2019 – 2020 Budget. (Ms. Parsons, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Mrs. Trinks, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services; and Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology). We will then circle back to the beginning, i.e., music program, Dean of Students and Grade 3 teacher.

Mrs. Parsons, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Overall decrease for the year. In terms of material in elementary tests, most are small items that are done over the year, i.e. foundations, consumables. All curriculum spending has been consolidated to her office. Anything pertinent to the curriculum, i.e. readers/writers workshop, Math, Science and Social Studies comes out of the curriculum budget.

- Elementary Textbooks \$40,000
(\$5,000 additional for third classroom needs to be set up)

- Middle & High School Textbooks \$30,000
(Includes \$12,000 for a full classroom library and book club books)
- Software (no new soft wear)
- Consultant Services (main spend is the Columbia On Site Staff Developer and CREC Science Support and Team Mentor Site)
- Staff Development is approximately the same as last year.
- General Supplies (i.e., food for Interview Committees and New Teacher Orientation)

Mr. Bourbonniere – Commend Mrs. Parsons for seeking a Literacy Specialist for District Wide 6 – 12 Questions: #1 When we cut budget we lost three literacy coaches in the 1.4 million dollars that Governor Malloy cut. His biggest concern was when the presentation was made with respect to Smarter Balance; he thinks in ELA we dropped two places. Significant increase in ELA and Math. So in your professional opinion, do you think that because we as a Board cut those three literacy positions, that is one of the reasons we went down in our DRG? Response – Mrs. Parsons – I cannot say that is the cause of the decrease. The more support we have the better.

#2 - Because we are a very small school district, we only have so much money to go around. You are looking at some of the data that you are getting and realizing that we need to put the literacy coach back in but unfortunately, you are only at the tip of the iceberg. In all honesty, the three literacy coaches that we lost, I think you need to get a literacy coach back into the two elementary schools. Response – Mrs. Parsons – Currently, there are two at Fisher and one at Plymouth Center. One at Eli and none at the high school. The three that were lost were one full time at the high school; a second full time at Eli and a .9 position at Plymouth Center.

#3 - So we had three additional coaches then compared to what we have now. Response – Mrs. Parsons – Currently, yes. We are looking to recover one for next year. The literacy coaches that we have now work with teachers for Tier I instruction but they also work directly with students and tutors to plan for Tier II and Tier III Instructions. The coaches that we lost were doing some direct student service work but were mostly with teachers. At the middle and high school, we need to go back and help support the interventionists and students in Tier II and III.

#4 - The district wide literacy coach you requested, where is this individual's main focus, to help the teachers to help the students or directly intervene one on one with a student. Response – Mrs. Parsons – this individual would be split between the middle and high schools, they would mainly focus working on the Tier II and Tier III. The individual would help to design plans, to help diagnose where students are having difficulty, help diagnosis, remediate, and help teachers plan instructions for the neediest students. They would be working with the interventionist, sometimes with special education teachers, working with students for a short term to get a plan going and then handing that plan off and going back and monitoring in a building capacity of the interventionists.

Mrs. Lucien – Question - How much do the team mentors make: Response – Mrs. Parsons - In State Legislation there is a site for Team Mentors, which indicates up to \$500 for the year per Mentee. The way teams are laid out, a Mentor is taking a Mentee through a module, there are four module projects, for each module there is a \$250 stipend.

Library – Mrs. Parsons – Paras and tutors are reviewing the inventory to begin weeding out books and using the money on hand to replenish books. Library supplies have been consolidated. There are no major changes in the library budget.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani - Question #1 - What are the plans for the system wide library books of \$8,000 for next year. Response – Mrs. Parsons - \$8,000 is for all four schools, which amounts to \$2,000 per school. The average age of the books in the libraries is in the late 1980's. Therefore, the district needs to weed out books that are no longer valid information for the students and replace them. We want to keep literature current.

Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology

- Some Highlights:
 1. Technology Equipment Replacement – Is in line with the District Technology Plan, which calls for a 5-year replacement cycle.
 2. Rukus WiFi 5 Controllers – Replacement of old wireless access points.
 3. Student Chrome Book – Equipment Replacement.
 4. Software – Software renewal licensing, i.e. PowerSchool, Microsoft annual Agreement.
 5. Repair Items – Chromebooks that are not insured by students
 6. Staff Development Training

Mrs. Parsons added that Technology and Curriculum are directly related as much of the work that is currently done is now electronic.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Notable Equipment Items for Technology

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| • Teacher Laptop | \$22,000 |
| • Wireless Access Controllers | \$ 9,500 |
| Totals approximately | \$31,000 |

Question – Is there any way we can look at grants through Microsoft, Google and/or Verizon?

Response – Mr. Trudeau – Over the past several years we have received grants for Chromebook from the state. He indicated he would keep exploring different options.

Question: - Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Where does the credit go from the town for our budget?

Mr. Hendrickson – It goes into technology assistance and it is netted out.

Mrs. Trinks – Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services

Decreases In Budget

- Outplacement Public & Non-Public
- Diagnostic Services
- Special Education Transportation

Increase In Budget

- Special Education Teachers Salaries
- Special Education Para Salaries
- Special Education Tutors Salaries

Question #1– Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Who are the PPT Coordinators? Response – Mrs. Trinks – Their title is that of PPT Facilitators. There is one in each of the buildings. This is a stipend position beyond their regular salary. Duties include assisting in scheduling PPT's, making certain the paperwork is processed and in her office in a timely manner.

#2 – Professional Development – Why is it that one year you requested \$4,000, the next year \$6,000 and this year \$10,000? Response – Mrs. Trinks – Psychologist, Social Workers, and Pathologists need to be updated in their fields; push from the state regarding technology for special education and paraprofessional training in special needs.

#3 – Why is it that this year you are requesting an increase of \$1,000 for travel? Response – Mrs. Trinks - Speech Pathologist, Teacher for the Hearing Impaired, Social Workers as well as herself all travel between buildings, attend out of district placements and PPT's. Opinion – Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – feels this to be a lot of extra driving that is planning on being done.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Concern – The district is spending \$365,000 to keep the students in district but only saving \$241,000.

Nursing – Most of the budget is in salaries.

Question: Mr. Elsaghir – Hepatitis B – Vaccine – Is this a mandate: Response – Mrs. Trinks – It needs to be offered to the employee.

Revisit

Mrs. Loveland, Principal Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

- School Psychologist – 6 days a month @ 2 – 3 hours per day (amount of time spent out of the building).
- Tier Behavior – Greater amount of physical aggression does not necessarily mean that those students are also Tier III.
- Hand Out, which addressed Tiers I, II, and III, which reviewed the overall process.
- Fall to Winter Growth (hand out)
- Staff spoke on their experiences and the need for a Dean of Students for additional help.

Question – Mr. Bourbonniere – How many schools can be designated as a Title I School? Concern – Where do we compromise between a Dean of Students at Harry S. Fisher and a grade 3 teacher at Plymouth Center School? Response – Mrs. Parsons – Title I money has strict guidelines. Funds are based on Free and Reduced Lunch numbers and Fisher's number is about 35% of those students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch. These monies can only be used for Harry S. Fisher.

Question – Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Can you explain why instead of increasing Literacy Coaches, Math Coaches and possibly Tutors, why that would not be more beneficial than a Dean? Response – Mrs. Loveland – Tutors and coaches do not necessarily always work with the Tier III behavior students.

Question – Mrs. Lucian - (1) Why is Title I money included in the budget? (2) Does this person (Dean of Students) need a 092? Response – Dr. Semmel – (1) half of the money in the \$24 million comes from the State of Connecticut as a grant. There is \$12 million in the budget from the State of Connecticut. There is about \$170,000 in the Title I grant that comes from the Federal Government. (2) The Dean of Students would follow the teacher contract. A 092 is preferred, but not required. Training would be provided during the summer months for the Dean of Students in order that this individual not take time during school days.

Question – Mr. Bourbonniere – To Administration, where is compromise in this budget so that everyone in this room is satisfied with the reasoning behind why a Dean of Students is needed? Response – Dr. Semmel – Our proposal was an attempt to make the best compromise we possibly could given the situations we have. The Board always has the right to add more money than what was proposed. If the Board would like to go beyond the 1.997%, they have the ability to make those amendments. Therefore, the compromise is the Board can talk about adding items back into the budget. It does not need to cut. In the end, it is the Board's final decision whether to add or subtract from the proposed budget.

Mrs. Collins, Principal Plymouth Center School

No matter what is decided, whether you as a Board choose to leave the 2019 – 2020 3rd grade class in one section with a tutor or add a second teacher, the PCS staff will continue to give their best effort on behalf of the children because that is who they are and what they do.

Mr. Elsaghir – Comment – Thanked Mrs. Collins. Her comments were very well done.

Question – Mr. Bourbonniere – To Mrs. Collins – In your professional opinion is it a good idea to keep going with these same 27 kids in that classroom to continue in the three, four and five grades?

Response - Mrs. Collins - It is hard to predict. It is difficult at this point to predict what may happen in August. Board may want to revisit this and possible other items in August when the enrollment numbers are available. Response - Mrs. Parsons - The times she was at PCS, she never noticed what was shared last week.

Question - Mrs. Kulesa - Left the last meeting upset and angry and could not believe this was the first time the Board was hearing of such horrific situations. Mrs. Collins, what do you mean by the incidents have stabilized? Did they happen within the first few week of school and there have not been serious incidents since then? Response - Mrs. Collins - There were some serious incidents in the earlier weeks of school. We had some 211 and 911 situations. Some were at the second grade level. Agencies were involved, internal and external support was involved, but we banded together and took steps to help the children who were in crisis. Mrs. Kulesa - This could occur in a classroom of 12 as well as in a classroom of 27. Mrs. Collins - We had students that we knew and anticipated would have struggles coming into the year and others we were not aware of. There are still dates, times and moments where things occur and they are responded to. Mrs. Trinks - The support that is offered for next year may not be a level of support one would like, but the tutor is no longer going to be shared. The tutor will be for that grade 3 classroom. Mr. Showers - In favor of another teacher. Find the money somewhere.

Question - Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani - If we do come and reevaluate in August what is the difference now as to August if two students move in or two students move out, since there is no cap as to the number of students a teacher has in a classroom. We need to make a decision now because there is no teacher contract yet, so there is no protection for any of the parents if 3 more students move in there will be a guarantee yes that the students will be split up. Mrs. Johnson - We do not need to make a decision today. We are making a proposal to bring to the Board of Finance to then bring to the Town Council. What is going to happen, at our next Board of Education Meeting the Board will make a proposal and vote on it? Once it is out of the Board's hands and the Town Council, the Board of Finance and the Board of Education meet, they make that decision as to whether we go to referendum or go to 3% up or down. Then the Board needs to return in June and make those hard decisions. We can make the percentage go up but that does not necessarily mean that it will happen in June and or in August. We do not know what the town side is going to allocate to our one singular line item. They cannot tell the Board how to allocate. Dr. Semmel - Clarification - The maximum piece of not being a cap is just a contractual piece. There is nothing in the contract that stops him from putting as many students as he wants in a classroom, there is just a caveat, about if it goes over 30 students he needs to be notified. There does not have to be a cap in the teacher's contract to indicate the Board or Superintendent are not comfortable with 28, 29 or 30. It does not need to be in the contract for the Board or Superintendent to make a decision about adding a classroom:

Mr. Foote - He was in a class of 45 students. Things are different now. Our job is to present to the Board of Finance and the Town Council the best thing that we can do. If we think that we need the two items that are at the forefront, he thinks they should be presented. Let them make the final decision as to whether the Board receives the money. Mrs. Kulesa - To make it clear, they will not say you are not getting the money for that specific thing. They will just indicate you are not getting the money. Mr. Foote - But if those items are put in as an addition, if we get the money we can do those things. He cannot make that decision as he only has one vote. Nevertheless, that is the way he feels.

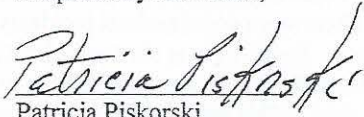
4. Public Comment (3-minute limit per person)

A number of individuals: (1) expressed their opinion regarding the grade 3 classroom for next year at Plymouth Center School, (2) retaining Mr. Keane full time at Terryville High School, and adding staff to the music program at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: Motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Mrs. Kremmel seconded Mr. Showers, all in favor, motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Patricia Piskorski".

Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary