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PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 9, 2021
North Pembroke Elementary School Library

7:00 PM

Call to Order

Mr. Boyle called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Present from Administration: Erin Obey, Superintendent; Marybeth Brust, Assistant Superintendent; Jessica DeLorenzo, Director of Student Services

Present from Committee: David Boyle, Vice Chair; Susan Bollinger, Secretary; Lance Kennedy and Susie Scholl
Absent: Michael Tropeano, Chair

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

No audience members present.

Adjustments to Agenda

None

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants were sent out electronically for approval.

Communications

For Discussion: Senator Moran's Request for Budget Priorities

Mrs. Obey said she the committee has a copy of the request from Senator Moran's office which is asking districts to list their budget request priorities. There is also a spreadsheet outlining what PPS has asked for in the past. In the past the PPS has asked for 100% funding of circuit breaker special education tuition and transportation instead of the 75% for circuit breaker and 50% for transportation. PPS in the past has also asked for some funding for vocational transportation and also for a cap on vocational tuition increases. Finally PPS is asking for \$100k to fund the PHS pathways being designed. Mrs. Scholl asked about the huge increase in petroleum and the effect on districts' transportation costs and Mrs. Obey said there is an inflation clause in the transportation contracts spelling out the percentage increase over the life of the contract. Mr. Boyle asked about paying the higher transportation costs due to the gas increase and Mrs. Obey said it takes a bit of time before the district will see the increase, but it will become an issue when talking about the rate for next year because PPS is in the last year of the three year contract. Mr. Kennedy said he is in support of including a budget request specific to Pembroke. Mrs. Obey said she will submit the requests on behalf of the school committee.

Consideration of Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2022

VOTE: On a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of March 1, 2022 as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Michael Tropeano

Superintendent's Report

FY23 Elementary and Secondary Budget Presentations

Mrs. Swift said elementary class sizes range from 14 to 24 and there are mostly three sections at each grade level with the exception of one section of four at North Pembroke and one section of four at Bryantville. Looking at next year the numbers remain similar in range, but the kindergarten numbers have increased from the previous year particularly Bryantville which is currently at 70 for three sections which is 23 students in each class. Hobomock is currently at 65 and North Pembroke is at 86 so with three sections that would be an average class size of 28 which is not a manageable class size so the numbers will have to be watched. If a section or teacher needs to be added it will be brought to the committee as part of the administration recommended budget. Mrs. Obey said there's a lot of movement in the kindergarten numbers and there will be a better idea of those numbers in March. Mrs. Simmons reviewed the focus areas of the elementary schools and said over the past few years even prior to COVID the elementary level has been working on providing targeted instruction through the reading specialists. This year there is the ability to use the Interrupted Learning Tutors and classes are shifting back to using small reading groups so that the interventions are not just outside of classroom but also within it. Currently there is 1.5FTE reading specialists so every building has a halftime staff member. The district wide curriculum team is exploring reading programs K-2. Social emotional supports are expanding to students displaying difficulty attending to classroom instruction due to behavioral and emotional challenges. Another focus area is to promote school readiness in kindergarten. Also hoping to expand the 6th grade Open Sci Ed program.

Mrs. Simmons went on to explain the incoming kindergarten focus areas. One focus is on school readiness. The schools are noticing at the kindergarten level there are readiness inequities as some students have attended preschool and others have not. A second focus is increased social and emotional support. In preschool, there are students that have not received typical exposure to skills due to the pandemic and this is causing an increased need for social emotional support. A third focus is increased academic expectations and assessing pre-academic skill development. Students coming in without the pre-academic base is causing some gaps. Another focus is increased Title I/reading intervention, and the final focus is the return to spring screenings of kindergarten students which gives a good idea of the incoming students and their needs. The IST team and the SST team which is made up of teachers and administrators that work on instructional and social emotional supports. Referrals throughout this year from IST has been between 10 and 16 for each school and the SST referrals are higher and based on the social emotional need of the students. The majority of the students are being referred for math and reading and the social emotional numbers are very high as well. The intervention supports that are being utilized are the halftime reading specialists servicing 23 students at Bryantville in grades 1 and 2, 26 students at Hobomock in grades K-2, and 29 students at North Pembroke in grades 1 and 2. The Interrupted Learning Tutors worked with groups of students at Bryantville that meet two days per week and worked with 52 students so far. Hobomock tutors worked with 31 students for four days per week and North Pembroke tutors worked with 51 students two days per week. The Interrupted Learning Tutors have allowed work with the kindergartners to go faster than typically could be done with just the reading specialists so it's been very helpful.

Mr. Murphy said to get a better idea of the number of students accessing the reading specialist it is four or five students with the reading specialist at a time and it's direct instruction and it runs for about a half hour, so it was discussed to focus those resources kindergarten to grade 2 to start out because that's where the biggest need was. The hope is to get expand to grades 3 and 4 as well. Data was pulled from the math and reading platforms and the reading program Lexia shows that in 2017-2018 47% of students were above grade level, 37% on grade level and 16% below. For 2021-2022 12% of students are above, 50% on and 38% below and this is just one indicator so no need for concern. The 2022-2023 priorities for the elementary schools right now is an additional 1.5FTE Reading Specialist as this is where the greatest success is with services. The other is the creation of a therapeutic intervention resource room at each school for struggling learners having difficulty accessing the general classroom on a daily basis. It would utilize some of the supports already in the buildings with a request for a para at each location. A priority 2 request would be an additional paraprofessional at each elementary school to support the kindergarten classrooms as they are all at about 22 students and the needs of the students have risen over time. The idea of the therapeutic intervention resource room would be for students that come into school and are just not ready to learn because most times these students end up in the school psychologist's office, the school social worker's office, the principal or vice principal's office. So that the students don't miss instruction time there are ideas on how to mirror instruction within a small group in a different location than the classroom where social pressures aren't. The idea is to have the social worker and a para staff the room and get the student(s) able to return to class. The paraprofessional will be trained in de-escalation techniques. There are things to be ironed out like an entrance and exit criteria, a classroom space, a

communication tool to be used when returning students to the general education classroom, a tracking database to record students and a 6-8 week central office review of the support to ensure that it is operating as intended. Mr. Boyle asked about having different grade level students in the same room and Mr. Murphy said the plan would be to break up the classroom using the two support staff. Mrs. Scholl asked if there are ways to help families have their incoming kindergartner more ready and Mr. Murphy said in April and May there are scheduled parent meetings for questions and administration is going to state what students should be learning how to do prior to coming to kindergarten and eventually provide training to parents.

Mrs. Bollinger said she thinks it's a great idea and the kids really need a way to de-escalate in order to go back and learn. Mr. Kennedy confirmed space shouldn't be an interest and confirmed that a contractor will be brought in to teach the social workers and the psychologists and help guide the proper set up. Mr. Murphy confirmed that other schools have implemented this so there are resources to tap into.

Mrs. McGarrigle said enrollment has been steady the last few years and expect about the same number of students next year as this year. Class size averages are averaging low 20s to high 20s. Mrs. Obey said the staff at PCMS have gotten to an efficient schedule after working on it for a long time. Numbers for the world languages is running in the low teens to high 20s and the high 20s is one French class. She reminded the committee that Latin was discontinued during 21-22 due to decreasing enrollment. The elective model restructure for 21-22 included the reduction of a music teacher that was transferred to another building and science and social studies teachers now teach one elective section per term in addition to the art and music teacher. There was also the reduction of a STEM Lab teacher when the STEM sections were redistributed. Title I math sections were redistributed to math teachers and Title I ELA sections were redistributed to ELA teachers. Mrs. Obey added that when students leave 6th grade and a 90-minute math block and go to the middle school where 7th grade math is 47 minutes, which is not enough for some students. In this model students are getting closer to 90 minutes of math which has tremendous benefits for those students. Mrs. McGarrigle said students taking Title I are taking it in place of a world language and getting extra support before they transition to PHS. The social emotional needs of PCMS students have emotional management and social skills issues as the biggest reasons for counseling. The bulk of students being seen are general education students and second are students on IEP with counseling in their IEP. There is an increased counseling need socially, emotionally and behaviorally across the board with special education students. The PCMS budget requests are a full time social worker to provide continuity and consistency across the week. A second request is for Enriching Students software to schedule students during Titan Time. The third request is for Terraponics growing racks for students to grow and harvest fresh produce. Students are looking to increase vegan and vegetarian offering at PCMS, and this will provide vocational opportunities for special education students. Mrs. Scholl confirmed the racks can be used year over year and said she loves the idea. Mrs. Bollinger said it is a great idea for students. Mr. Kennedy said it is a great program and he encourages hands on learning. He suggested looking a partnerships with companies to help support the program. Mr. Kennedy confirmed that there are two .5FTE social workers and the budget request is to have one 1FTE social worker.

Mr. Talbot said the enrollment data is leveling off and expects it to stay similar next year. Of the 774 students, 20% receive some sort of service on an educational plan, either an IEP, 504 or FEL/ELL. The increase of 3% in the number of 504 plans is consistent or below the State average and the increase is related to social emotional needs. This is expected to grow and some of the budget requests are related to this. Class sizes are holding steady with math, but history class sizes are larger. There was a reduction of a history teacher a couple of years ago and the electives are driving that number up because there is a large number of history electives, and they are very popular with the students. Mrs. Obey added that 18, 21, 22, 23 are favorable high school class sizes to the school committee. Mr. Talbot said the PHS priorities include the request of a full-time teacher to help grow the Compass Program which currently is a transition program for students returning from a long-term absence as defined by five or more days. A second request is for the restoration of a full-time math teacher that was reduced in the budget a couple of years ago because of the class sizes. A third request is for a 0.2FTE Spanish teacher. A fourth request is a full time Educational Technology Integration Specialist. Additional request is for a Pathway Coordinator for the Pathways that have been discussed and that position would be split between coordinating and teaching. There is also a request for funding to continue the Unified Team Sports as it was grant funded this year and will only be partially grant funded next year.

Mr. Talbot explained the rationale behind the request for a Compass Teacher. A teacher will meet the actual growth in the number of students that require our support but also the anticipated growth and not only the growth in numbers but the depth of the support that our students are requiring. Right now it's a transition program and the goal is to gradually introduce the students back into their regular classes within a very prescribed period of

time of five to ten days. There is an increase in the number of students who are having a harder time going back in and that is managed on a case-by-case basis.

The longer period of time leads to a lack of instructions so adding a teacher will provide the instructional component needed. It is not a special education program, but the desire is to hire a special education teacher since they tend to have knowledge/certification in more than one content area. He noted that as of January 31, 2020, 10 students had accessed the Compass Program due to mental health needs and as of March 1, 2022, 25 students had accessed it for the same reason. Also, the Adjustment Counselors are seeing an increase in their case load as well and together they have 110 students they see on a regular scheduled basis as part of a plan and that does not factor in the students that they see in the moment that might not be on their case load. Mr. Kennedy asked how many students are seen there on a given day and time and Mr. Talbot said between one and five. Mr. Kennedy asked how long they access it, and Mr. Talbot said a defined period of time is established and it is reevaluated and extended if needed. .

Mr. Talbot explained the rationale for the Math Teacher request. The addition would bring the math department in line with the English department as they are both four year graduation requirements and both MCAS and SAT/ACT subjects. It would lower the class sizes and give more flexibility when offering Math Strategies to struggling students.

Mr. Talbot explained the rationale for the .2 Spanish Teacher. Spanish class sizes especially at the higher levels are increasing. There is currently at .8FTE Spanish Teacher so the request is to bring that teacher to 1.0FTE.

Mr. Talbot went on to explain the rationale for the Ed. Tech Integration Specialist position for 7-12. Desire is to continue to expand the SAMR model and integrate education technology more readily to build on the momentum from FY21 for both teachers and students.

Mrs. Scholl said she thinks the Compass Program is going to be instrumental in the success of students in the aftermath of COVID. Mrs. Bollinger said she also like the idea for the Compass Program. Mrs. Scholl suggested tapping into the educational platforms and instructional ideas used during remote learning to help the incoming teacher.

Mr. Kennedy asked about the referral process for the program. Mr. Talbot said if a student is absent for more than four days a re-entry meeting is held and then the Compass Program is offered depending on how many days they were out and on how much work they got done while they out. A determination is made on how many days or periods the student will be there based on that information. There is also a review before the student shifts out.

Consideration for Approval: Surplus Materials Rolling Carts

Mr. Boyle said as a result of the new projectors/speakers project there are 75 surplus plastic and metal carts that are no longer needed, and Mr. Hall would like the authorization to remove the carts as they're taking up valuable storage space. Mrs. Obey said they will be offered to another Town department and if they are not wanted then they would be recycled, and the value would get re-deposited.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Sue Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to deem the rolling carts as surplus.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Michael Tropeano

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

3/22

VOTE: At 8:53PM, on a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Sue Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Michael Tropeano

APPROVED: April 5, 2022

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of March 1, 2022 as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Michael Tropeano

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Sue Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to deem the rolling carts as surplus.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Michael Tropeano

VOTE: At 8:53PM, on a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Sue Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Michael Tropeano