

Plymouth School Committee

December 4, 2006

A meeting of the Plymouth School Committee was held on Monday, December 4, 2006, at Plymouth Community Intermediate School at 7:00 p.m.

Members present were Linda McAlduff, John White, Jane Freedman, Patricia Adelman, Nicole Manfredi, and Dennis Begley.

Present from Administration were Barry Haskell, Gary Maestas, Dr. Carol Young and Robert Gurek.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. McAlduff informed the viewing audience that tonight's meeting was a budget workshop meeting and it was scheduled to continue on Tuesday Dec. 5th at 7:00 p.m., and on Wednesday, Dec. 6th at 7:00 p.m., if necessary.

Mr. Haskell delivered the budget message and provided an overview of the budget development process. He discussed the three tiers considered in preparation of the budget and the guidelines used. He noted an escalation in transportation and utility budgets due to increasing energy costs. Mr. Haskell acknowledged three members of the Advisory and Finance Committee who were present.

Mr. Gurek provided a Financial Summary of the budget and highlighted some of the pieces of the budget book. He noted that the budget is predominantly salary-based. He discussed Cost Centers and the further breakdown of each Cost Center to component object codes. Mr. Gurek suggested looking to the Chart of Accounts for further reference.

Cost Center #51 – Accountability and Assessment

Michelle Roy presented an overview of the components of Cost Center 51. A brief discussion on enhanced services followed.

Cost Center #56 - DW Curriculum & Professional Development

Gary Maestas presented an overview of the components of Cost Center 56. A discussion of curriculum development and curriculum review followed, as well as detail on Lines 26, 27 & 28. Mr. Gurek and Mr. Maestas addressed use of surplus on Line 26.

Cost Center #01 – Mt. Pleasant Preschool

Cost Center #05 – Cold Spring Elementary School

Cost Center #06 – Federal Furnace Elementary School

Cost Center #07 – Hedge Elementary School
Cost Center #08 – Indian Brook Elementary School
Cost Center #09 – Manomet Elementary School
Cost Center #10 – Nathaniel Morton Elementary School
Cost Center #12 – South Elementary School
Cost Center #14 – West Elementary School

Mr. Haskell invited the elementary and preschool principals to the table. Bill Kane indicated that, with the adoption of the science and reading budget last year, the current budget needs were met. He spoke on behalf of all of the elementary staff. Mrs. McAlduff invited individual comments from all staff members at the table. Peg McKay indicated her agreement with Mr. Kane and emphasized the team effort of the elementary staff and their cohesiveness in working together. Dan Harold spoke of enhancements achieved through community involvement. Dave Sinclair indicated confidence with the budget; however, he emphasized the need for capital improvements. The matter of updated materials and textbooks was discussed. Mary Mello indicated that much of the money in her budget comes through state and federal grants and that she received only a 1% reduction in the Community Partnership Grant.

Cost Center #53 – DW Pupil Personnel Services

Robert Sherman noted that most of the Special Education (SPED) budget is embedded within the cost center school itself and differentiated from Cost Center #53 which includes big-ticket items, such as services with private SPED schools and services with collaborative schools. He emphasized the best way to contain these escalating costs is to develop programs to keep SPED students within the district. He requested reallocated dollars to do so. He discussed sources of funding for SPED, and highlighted the Circuit Breaker Program, a reimbursement program for the servicing of high-cost SPED students. He discussed “going on past history” to determine the percentage of increase. He noted various grants received for salary of staff members, teachers, and paraprofessionals, as well as for professional development. He noted working with other school districts to control the escalation of transportation costs. Lastly, he discussed the McKinney Vento Homeless Act and the transportation cost involved. Mr. Haskell discussed the district’s commitment to developing new programs. Mr. Sherman addressed questions from Mr. Driscoll of the Advisory and Finance Committee.

Cost Center #52 – DW Technology

Ellen Driscoll outlined the Technology budget that reflected the same level of services in the past. She noted that increases are based on increased gasoline prices, professional development, and maintenance contract on the Nortel equipment. A discussion of line increases followed.

Cost Center #22 – Plymouth South Middle School

Anne Stempleski highlighted significant items in the budget for Cost Center #22,

those being the Life Skills Program, Language-based Program, Advanced Readiness Learners Program (ARL), and Assessment programs. She presented a detailed breakdown of these costs and other line items in the budget. The increased salary in the budget was discussed. Mr. Haskell noted that the movement of teachers within the district causes fluctuation in salary budgets within particular buildings and how that information is tracked with computer software.

Cost Center #21 – Plymouth Community Intermediate School

Fred Sarke noted very few changes from '07 to '08. He noted the new system-wide Care Program and its cost-saving factor, as well as the educational factor. He noted other minor changes in the budget.

Mr. Haskell invited the coordinators to talk about the middle school program.

Kathy Babini outlined the frameworks of the Social Studies curriculum, noting a civic education program and Project Citizen. She addressed Mr. Driscoll's inquiry regarding materials and texts and whether they have been updated.

Karen Backman outlined the curriculum frameworks for math and noted that a massive math curriculum update was done over the summer. She highlighted a software program for math that utilizes data to make assessments of weaknesses and districtwide final exams for feedback to drive instruction.

Lisa White, ELA coordinator, stated that they are always looking at curriculum frameworks, assessment results, types of novels and literature available in classrooms, and writing programs to make sure they are meeting the needs of the students. She highlighted reading lab programs that teach skills and strategies that improve literacy skills and carry over into other subjects. She also explained the inventory of books and how they are ordered and maintained.

Nick Micozzi stated that since the science curriculum frameworks were revised by the Department of Education this year, the science curriculum was completely revised and daily lesson plans aligned for grades 1-8, based on drafts provided by the Department of Education this summer. They were also engaged in a collaborative in 10th grade and revised the biology curriculum with 22 other school districts. He discussed shifting of books which are available online and in hard copy. He highlighted online media as cost saving, up-to-date, and its multi-media nature addresses different learning styles.

Mr. Haskell addressed concerns from Mr. Driscoll about lack of foreign language course offerings. Mr. Haskell emphasized standards-based education, high-stakes testing, and that the national agenda is math, ELA, and soon-to be social studies and science, noting that proficiency in those areas first is required by the Board of Education. He noted that Plymouth Community Intermediate School is not making the grade.

Mr. Micozzi outlined the implementation of high-stakes testing and remediation in

science.

Meeting into recess at 9:03 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 9:15 p.m.

Cost Center #27 – DW Middle School

Gary Maestas noted that, with the exception of Line Item 7, the budget was for the ARL program at the middle school level. A discussion of the ARL and social studies program followed. Mr. Maestas noted that the districtwide coordinators, in conjunction with the curriculum coordinating committee, had worked to develop a ten-year plan for a textbook adoption cycle and curriculum revision cycle to project costs for textbooks and revision of curriculum documents to be put in on an adoption cycle in the budget.

Motion by Mrs. Freedman, seconded by Mr. Begley, to adjourn. Vote to adjourn was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary