

**Minutes from the East Bridgewater School Committee
Public Hearing on Tuesday, March 5, 2019,
on the FY20 School Department Budget**

A Public Hearing on the FY20 School Department Budget was held on March 5, 2019, at 7:00 PM in the Dr. Judith A. Riordan Performing Arts Center in the East Bridgewater Jr/Sr High School. Members present were: Chairperson Ellen Pennington, Vice-Chairperson Hazel Tuesday, Secretary Robert Rhuda, Jonathan Babcock, Theresa Maltz, Gordon McKinnon, Superintendent Elizabeth Legault, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Gina Williams, School Business Administrator John Shea, and Recording Clerk Joanne Benner.

Also in attendance were: community members, BOS member Carol Julius, and Fincom members Melanie Dean and Jennifer Kitchenham

Chairperson Ellen Pennington opened the meeting at 7:01 PM.

Motion: Maltz/Babcock

Vote: 6 in favor

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY19 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Presentation of the proposed FY20 School Department Budget

Chair Pennington thanked the budget sub-committee for the work they put into creating the FY20 budget. She said the first priority is the educational welfare of the children and the budget presented this evening does not include any extras. Mrs. Pennington thanked the town for their continued support of the schools.

Superintendent Legault thanked Dr. Williams and John Shea for partnering with her on creating the budget. The budget is done following the Strategic Plan of the district. Each school has an improvement plan and it follows the district's plan.

- Strategic Plan – the four pillars of our Strategic Plan are: curriculum and instruction, social emotional wellness, professional development, and technology. We are a comprehensive PreK-12 district that delivers rigorous and well-rounded instruction while fostering social and emotional health. Professional Development is provided to all staff so they can support the PreK-12 education and inspire every student to achieve personal and academic excellence. Technology is a tool that is used to enhance and engage the learning experiences of our students.

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- Where we are Today – In FY19 the salary line total is 17,197,823, non-salary line is 3,122,378, for a total school budget of 20,320,201. When adding in the cost for busing 936,000 it will bring the total to 21,256,201.
- What we did with our Funding – We spent \$150,000 on our Math program purchasing Ready Math and Freckle for our K-6 students and Pearson for students in 7-12. The Data Team analyzes MAP data, MCAS data, and DIBELS data and this supports and drives instruction. We hired a full time IT Director, behavior specialist, STEAM specialist and continued to fill retirement slots. Professional Development had a budget of \$50,000 with over 175 course offerings. Some of the other things we did were negotiate four collective bargaining units, start a girl's hockey team with West Bridgewater, upgrade cameras at the Mitchell School, new band uniforms, a time and attendance system, and books for the library.
- New Accomplishments – A SPED reserve fund was created, we were accepted into the MSBA ARP for a new boiler at the Central School, received two new grants, built a new website that is ADA compliant, and work co-operatively with the EB Outreach Coalition on substance abuse.
- Average Class Size, English – We were able to bring down the class sizes at the Central and Mitchell Schools to approximately 20/21 students. At the Jr/Sr High School we continued to add teachers, 4 last year, which allowed a reduction in class size to an average of 22.
- Average Class Size, Math – At the Central School class size remained the same because the kids stay with the same teacher. At the Mitchell School the average is 19 and 23 in the Jr/Sr High School.
- EBPS Curriculum Review – The content areas for curriculum review are: Science and Technology, Math, Wellness (PE, Health, Guidance), Social Studies, Language, ELA, Art, Music Tech Ed. After spending a year researching and reviewing potential sources a pilot/purchase is made and implemented the following year. It is then determined how well it worked for us. Massachusetts has not updated the frameworks for health in 20 years and this is the year they have chosen to do it but their timeframe is off from where we are now. The district is focusing on social/emotional this year and will stall PE, Health, and Wellness until the new frameworks are released. At the end of the year an action plan will be submitted to the School Committee with the curriculum, program, and services. It was asked by a parent why there isn't a more robust STEM program at the high school and Dr. Williams explained that the money we had needed to be paid across the district and we do not have the funding to do what we want. We are addressing all of the standards in the frameworks.

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- Professional Development – an extensive list of professional development offerings was shared in the PowerPoint presentation. Samplings of the offerings are: Tiered Focused Monitoring, MASSCUE, Teaching Writing, Google’s Applied Digital Skills, and ALICE training. A comprehensive list is available upon request. In the past we provided funding for staff member and would reimburse them for courses. Now we capture the money and send staff to trainings that align with our philosophy and strategic goals. Most of them occur in house but if approved we will let staff go out of district.
- FY20 Increase for What and Why? –
 - We want to continue to maintain manageable classroom size
 - Enhance support for social emotional needs with three new social workers from North River Collaborative
 - New District wide Wellness Action Plan
 - New platform to bring together academic and social emotional data to better advise teachers and administration on early warning signs
 - Continue to maintain and upgrade technology for both students and teachers
 - To support NEASC Accreditation 5 year success plan
 - Security guard for Mitchell School, Mitchell School behavioral specialist, .50 ESL teacher
- Where we are Going Tomorrow! – The FY2020 budget has 17,699,604 in salary, 3,180,291 in non-salary for a total of 20,879,895. We are currently out to bid for a new busing contract and have included the current number of 936,000 bringing the total to 21,815,895.
- Budget Change – Salary increase of 501,781, non- salary increase of 57,913 for a total increase of 559,694. We are not including a bus increase at this time because the bids are due on March 19th.
- FY2020 Budget Assumptions –
 - Develop a needs-based budget
 - Maintains current class sizes
 - Meets contractual obligations
 - EBFA (teacher) Collective Bargaining Agreement currently in negotiations
 - Bus transportation contract is currently out to bid with a due date of March 16, 2019
 - Includes special education tuition cost increase with zero increase in number of SPED students
- FY2020 Budget Projected Increase – In 2017 the 2020 budget projection that was presented to FinCom, Public Hearing, and BOS and in 2018 budget meeting was \$615,660. The 2020 budget projection present in 2018 at FinCom, Public Hearing, and BOS and in 2019 budget meetings was \$609,606. The current request, to keep level

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services this year is \$559,694. This number is not a surprise we have been forthcoming over the last few years in our meetings with the FinCom liaison and the town manager.

- Requested Increase Trend – The requested increase for this year is 2.75%. Mr. Shea said that in 2019 the town asked for a 1.5% and in 2020 a 2% budget. We are doing the best we can to work with the town and give them the best that we can do to maintain services. For those here and those watching we would love to come in at 6% but it is important for the community to know there are constraints we have to work within. In 2018 the request increase was 815,957 at 4.31%, in 2019 the requested increase was 578,854 at 2.93%, and in 2020 the requested increase is 559,694 at 2.75%.
- Chapter 70 Funding – The governor’s budget has taken into account that the funding has been lacking to all schools in the state. Chapter 70 funding in FY2020 shows an increase of 203,540 which is great news for the town and school. Mr. Shea worked with a consultant for a two year estimate in FY21 and he projects we may see an increase of 467,112. Chapter 70 funding is difficult to understand but we are confident this proposal by the governor will be pushed through the house and senate. We will know more in the summer when the information is released.
- 2018 District/School Report Card – These next slides show how we need to drive the district forward.
 - This is only for the Jr/Sr High School and it speaks to chronic absenteeism with the rate being at 20.8% in 2018. This number is too high. It is a huge issue and can indicate students’ social and emotional needs; we need to look at it and determine why they aren’t coming to school.
 - Our graduation rates are increasing because we are working with students and determining what they need to succeed.
 - MCAS testing has worked and now it is revamped with a more rigorous test with new accountability.
 - Achievement and growth is being looked at on how our students compare to students across the state and how much they have grown. MAP does the same thing and we receive the data 3 times a year. It is an important assessment as it identifies what and when they are ready to learn.
 - The district accountability is currently at 45% with most districts looking at 50%. The accountability is determined using information related to student performance on state test, chronic absenteeism, high school completion, and advanced coursework completion. It is expected that we work towards closing the gap and hit 75% or higher.
 - Overall classification indicates we are in a precarious position, partially meeting targets, and have a lot of work to do. We are doing what other districts are being forced to do to move beyond this indicator. We are going through the academies now and determining how to reduce barriers for students and see why they are

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not achieving or growing. The biggest gap points are assigned to the high school as it has more weight because of graduation. There are areas where we received 0 points with no numbers because we have an insufficient number of students to get points. The growth is something we have been ignoring when we have students doing well; we tend to leave them alone and focus more on students that need support; we need to be mindful of students that are ready to take on more rigorous content. Resources need to be re-allocated and teachers need to be empowered. Providing training and support for our teachers will allow them to better serve the students and not just support the academic need of the lowest students. Movement is expected every year and it has not yet been determined what the ramifications are other than the state would look at the district and come in with intervention and assistance. The majority of districts are in the partially meeting targets bracket and it was done intentionally to push the state forward. The commissioner has acknowledged we are ranked #1 in the country for public education but growth is less than we would like. He has pushed the governor for the increase in funding.

- Clear Gov – This is a program we purchased and it allows us to be transparent with the community. It can be found on the district website, www.ebps.net. The information on the site is taken from our End of the Year Report, DESE, and the Mass Department of Revenue. It takes all of the districts in the state and compares them to “like” towns. They are similar in average household incomes and student percentage. The per pupil expenditure of 320 schools in Massachusetts ranks East Bridgewater as 319.

Superintendent Legault said it last year and will say it again that the increase in the budget is to support your children, our students, and a vote to accept it is the right thing to do. It’s Great to be a Viking! We hope you support us and will gladly answer any questions you may have. As the fiduciary of the district she works very closely with School Business Administrator John Shea. In every community the largest piece of the budget is the school department because of its size. All of the departments are equally important. On behalf of herself, Dr. Williams, John Shea, faculty, and staff she asks that the School Committee certify the FY2020 budget of \$20,879,895. Ms. Legault thanked the people that attended and said questions will now be taken.

Chair Pennington thanked the attendees and asked if there were any questions or comments.

- Andrew Rankin said he has 2 daughters in the schools and that this presentation was eye opening to him. He believes it is clear that the area of social and emotional wellness be taken into account immediately and that having 1 out of every 5 students absent it too much. His second question is regarding the chatter he has heard about some AP classes being removed. Dr. Williams said that within the school department we have adjustment counselors and school psychologists but we need more bodies at the lower levels. We are bringing graduate students through the collaborative and will get a full week of social worker assistance from this. We need to have better services so

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we do not need to outsource our students. The cost associated with this is \$48,000 and it is for the oversight of the certified licensed social worker. The graduate students are not being paid because this is a requirement for them to graduate. Speaking to the AP classes there is no reductions this year, chemistry was added, and we are looking to add psychology next year. The one thing under consideration is having US History part 1 and part 2 combined into a one year program. We would then add AP European history.

- Corinne McCarthy has a student in the Central School and the Mitchell School. She is concerned about the NEASC action plan and that kids have studies and redo electives. Programming is very important and without department chairs the programming can't be effectively put together. Mrs. McCarthy understands it is not the fault of the district and she would like to help get the town on our side to get the money needed. Superintendent Legault thanked her and said her concerns do not fall on deaf ears. We have curriculum and tech facilitators and we do need more leadership rolls. We are looking at a new schedule that can support programing and we need faculty. Mr. Duffey has visited other districts, Abington, West Bridgewater, Plymouth North and South to learn how they schedule. Change is difficult and we want more class offerings; we need to support the students. Mr. Duffey has put together his standards and will forward it to NEASC for approval. We are currently in corrective action so they will come back in 3 years.
- Bill Pellegrino commented that Ms. Duggan is one of the best teachers and has an 80% success rate under the current model of teaching and he thinks it would be crazy to change that model. He asked, "Are we sure we are not losing any AP sciences?" The Superintendent responded that she is not aware of any changes in this regard. We will not be letting go of any teachers and many schools have moved towards the one year model.
- Rob Lyons said his 17 year old and the younger set are concerned classes are being cut. The Superintendent does not know where that is coming from and has not seen a program of studies; she believes there is misinformation out there. Mr. Lyons said he has met some great teachers and people in the school system and that we are not giving you enough justice. There is an election coming up and he is hoping there is a proposal on how to get more funding for the schools.
- Jennifer Kitchenham said she would like to challenge the School Committee, Finance Committee, and the Board of Selectman to step up their game, raise the bar in dealing with each other, and show more respect. The town does not have a lot of money and we need everyone to work together to change the culture. If you want to invest in your community go to meetings and nothing will change until this happens.
- Andrew Rankin knows the original number was trimmed to 2.75% and personally thinks expecting a universal standard percentage for all town departments doesn't make

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Motion: Babcock/Maltz

Vote: 6 in favor

Respectfully submitted by,

Joanne M. Benner
Recording Clerk

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