

February 24, 2014 OSC School Programs Subcommittee meeting.

The meeting started at 7:16 pm. In attendance were Dick Benka, Peter Rowe, Len Weiss, Alan Morse, Helen Charlupski, as well as subcommittee members Tim Sullivan, Lisa Serafin, Beth Jackson Stram (by phone) and Jim Stergios.

Beth noted that as she is on the phone, all votes would be taken by roll call.

Agenda

1. Minutes – from tech meeting in January; from Feb 6 School Subcommittee
2. Any further questions on Superintendent’s FY15 budget message (that will inform the next agenda item)
3. Narrow the list of issues we’ve explored, identifying:
 - issues that can be taken off the table
 - issues that we can report out in the near term, and confirm what needs to be done to finalize our report
 - issues where further exploration on implementation and costs is required (and specify what additional analysis will need to be done)
4. Other business / next steps
 - a. Research for MIT business school students
 - b. Future meetings

Impact of the 2015 Bridge on Future OSC deliberations

Jim and Tim asked about the impact of the 2015 bridge budget on the 2016-2020 budgets and therefore the future work of the OSC (including any additional recurring spending the OSC will have to take into account). Peter provided the view that every year we will learn about successes and failures and what PSB will run into, with adjustments to specifics related to details like what is included in technology infrastructure, software and staff support investments.

Peter noted that the superintendent wanted to be at the meeting but is traveling, that the OSC will have access to a full budget document on Friday (2/28/14). PSB seeks to bring in \$1 million in one-time money (circuit breaker account, revolving fund balance, etc.) from the school side. He further discussed the impact of the “tail” on the current collective bargaining agreement and the possibility of such a tail in the future agreement. Len Weiss noted the cash accounting basis for budgeting used so far and how that leads to a mismatch between revenues and expenditures. He urged a “placemaker” that ensures that we have sufficient money in the year and avoids future tails.

Lisa asked Peter if the OSC and this subcommittee have a role or need to have a role in talking about the FY15 budget. Peter noted that the process going forward is to have meetings, with finance subcommittee, advisory committee, appropriation approved by selectmen and town

meeting. Tim underscored his desire to see the longterm picture. Jim suggested developing questions regarding the impact of the FY15 budget on the future budget – tech and programs. There was general agreement on this point. In part, this exercise would aim to understand the FY15 budget items that were included in the original PSB presentation documents on “catchup” and “enhancements.” **Tim and Jim were tasked with trying to frame this up on catchup/enhancements and technology, respectively.** Beth noted and there was general agreement that this should be a very brief discussion before the full OSC and does not merit a full agenda item.

Contract

Lisa asked if the contract terms will be known by June 30, and the answer was that it is unknown but perhaps not likely. Dick noted that the OSC will build recommendations for September 30. Tim asked if there is a sense on the contract terms and potential increases.

Technology

Jim noted that on technology there is still lack of clarity on goals (especially academic goals) and measures of success. Tim and Lisa asked what type of presentation or discussion the subcommittee should have on technology – should it be in front of the whole committee or dealt with in this specific subcommittee? The sense of the subcommittee was that this is a big enough issue to take before the full OSC especially because the initial presentation was made before the full OSC. Dick noted that the MIT task Force might be able to look at the governance issue. Beth suggested having the MIT folks look at cost savings in IT. Jim suggested that the IT and ET folks should meet and understand whether the MIT folks can add value before assigning them to such a task. **Dick noted that he was writing up a set of questions representing possible assignments for the MIT Task Force.**

Reporting out Subcommittee Findings

Beth noted that we are ready to report on out most topics. Two questions were discussed:

- (Lisa) The need for more work on phased catch-up costs and phased enhancements;
- (Tim) the right year to use in writing up the report (starting with FY14, FY02 for benchmarking and analysis?).

On these points, Beth noted that we can work back from an end number (what was previously requested) and look at what the bridge budget does to determine what the need is, what PSB has done and what PSB needs. Other attendees noted that it is important to determine the starting year. The start year raised questions around the quality of the product (Lisa) and new state requirements (Helen). Tim suggested that the MIT TF might be able to help in benchmarking specific items (including nurses, guidance counselors, administrators, etc.), and several questions were raised (Beth and Lisa) regarding the expertise of the MIT TF to undertake this work and the need for contextual knowledge. Jim suggested that we ask the MIT TF to consider gathering the data, presenting it to the OSC and the PSB for vetting and then to vet the data and definitions to ensure accuracy.

Lisa noted that we should have the MIT TF do benchmarking on health care cost sharing. Dick noted that there is currently an 83% cost share, but a 70% share in many other districts. The Mass Municipal Association has much of this data. Alan Morse noted that Brookline moved

from 75% to 83% cost sharing as part of the GIC reform of 2008-2009.

BCBA

There was some discussion around the work of BCBA's. Further clarity on their specific role(s) in the classroom is needed.

Class Size

Beth noted that subcommittee's analyses of class size are very close to complete. More work is needed on how to get it implemented. Jim suggested asking one of the public commenters (Carol Schraft to speak with us about how to do that, given her long tenure in PSB). Tim, Lisa and Dick discussed how efficient we can be in class assignments/class size optimization. Dick noted that moving to a class size of 22 would save 2 classes, and that a class size of 24 would save 4 classrooms. Beth, Jim and Lisa discussed possible changes to the assignment schedule, with Jim noting orientation in the fall is especially easy for kindergartners and Lisa noting that there is a benefit to earlier orientation.

WLP

Len and Lisa discussed the World Language Program, with Len underscoring that it is important to see the WLP as a "replacement" (if not for WLP, you have to fill the time with another subject and teacher). BHS Tutorial, it was noted, is different – that is not a replacement and perhaps an efficiency that can be gained in order to lower the number of new teachers that have to be hired to deal with enrollment growth. Lisa noted that thinking about how to move WLP class length might allow it to serve as a block for other teacher preparation.

Beth noted that the Superintendent would like to see WLP get a full program review, with some focus on student learning impacts. **Jim noted that he would be pleased to look into the issue of how much class time in WLP is needed in early grades to allow for student gains in second language acquisition.**

Next Steps

There was general agreement that we should close out the discussions of **(1) WLP and Tutorial (which would fall to Tim for a draft to be distributed to the committee)** and **(2) Collective bargaining (which would fall to Lisa for an initial draft).**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 pm..