



School Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHELSEA SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 30, 2017

Approved April 6, 2017

The Chelsea School Committee met on Thursday, March 30, 2017 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 500 Broadway, Chelsea.

Members Present: Yessenia Alfaro-Alvarez, Ana Hernandez, Diana Maldonado, Richard Maronski, Shawn O'Regan, Robert Pereira and Jeanette Velez.

Also Present: School Superintendent Dr. Mary M. Bourque, Assistant Superintendent Linda Breau, Executive Director of Administration and Finance Gerald McCue, Director of Personnel Tina Sullivan, Chief Academic Officer Sarah Kent, and School Business Manager and Clerk to the School Committee Barbara Martin.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Report of the Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Bourque discussed the reviews that took place following the March 9th meeting, including meetings with administrators and principals. Dr. Bourque also spoke about the various meeting she attended at the State House and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She notes that there are recommendations for a "Pot Hole Solution", which is a onetime funding to help close the \$2.7M gap. Dr. Bourque further explained that the School Committee must send a balanced budget to the City Manager by March 31, 2017.

Dr. Bourque along with Executive Director of Administration and Finance Gerald McCue presented a power point reviewing the challenges and priorities for FY2018. They also responded to stakeholders concerns. A copy of the presentation is attached and forms a part of these minutes.

Mrs. Carlisle joined that meeting at this time.

Public Comment:

Shan Habene-	Concern about class size at Chelsea High School for some programs.
Norielez De Jesus-	Understands difficulty of state funding and also wants community to know Chelsea Collaborative supports youth through after school programs and hours.
Kathryn Anderson-	Regarding presentation, noted that Special Education is just not about caseloads and that a change in co-teaching models cuts down on opportunities for Special Education students. She also noted that transportation costs account for large portion of increase in Special Education budget.

Unfinished Business:

- Upon the recommendation of the School Superintendent, Mr. Pereira moves to approve the following line-item amounts from the general fund for the 2017-2018 School Budget totaling \$86,500,000:

District Administration	\$2,147,399
Instruction & Assessment	\$1,353,121
Special Education & Pupil Personnel	\$11,786,490
Benefits, Payroll Adjustments, Insurance	\$16,276,016
Technology Services	\$1,694,625
Facilities Management & Transportation	\$11,019,390
Chelsea High School	\$10,911,952
Eugene Wright Science & Technology	\$ 3,689,469
Joseph A. Browne Middle School	\$ 3,447,070
Clark Avenue Middle School	\$ 3,596,902
Edgar F. Hooks Elementary School	\$ 3,450,941
William A. Berkowitz Elementary School	\$ 3,435,834
Frank M. Sokolowski Elementary School	\$ 3,433,428
George F. Kelly Elementary School	\$ 3,052,253
The John Silber Early Learning Center	\$ 5,569,431
Other Educational Programs	<u>\$ 1,732,388</u>
Total General Fund Expenses	\$86,500,000

Chairman Velez called for a roll call vote.

Jeanette Velez	Y
Rosemarie Carlisle	Y
Ana Hernandez	Y
Kelly Garcia	Y
Shawn O'Regan	Y
Richard Maronski	AB
Yessenia Alfaro-Alvarez	Y
Robert Pereira	Y
Diana Maldonado	AB

Having seven votes in the affirmative the motion was approved.

- Consideration and action to accept the changes to Chelsea Public Schools Calendar for school year 2016-2017 for Chelsea High School only.

On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Recorded by



Barbara A. Martin
Business Manager
Clerk to the Chelsea School Committee



Chelsea Public Schools

Proposed 2017-2018 School Budget
School Committee
March 30, 2017



2017-2018
School Budget Cover
By: Nataly L. Grade 5
Clark Ave Middle School

Fiscal Challenge

- FY2018 Budget based on new funding: \$86,500,000
- FY2018 Budget based on identified needs: \$89,213,066
- Funding Gap/Savings Target \$2,713,066

Aligning our Strategic Objective & Initiatives with Budget Priorities

- Strategic Objective
 - Strengthen Tier I Instruction
- Strategic Initiative
 - Improve the rigor and daily effectiveness of standards-based lessons through the use of district-identified instructional practices.

Funding Priorities/Savings Goals

- Provide funding for salaries that support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers
- Maintain compliance in special education and ELL programs
- Fund contractual obligations
- Prioritize classroom teachers, increase class size if reasonable

Funding Priorities/Savings Goals

- Prioritize support for Chelsea High School
- Target duplicative or less effective strategies
- Continue support for student health and social/emotional learning
- Ensure adequate funds to support a safe, secure, and comfortable learning environment



Stakeholder Concerns

Comment: Not enough time to comment on the budget.

- **Response:** Up until 2016 budget, the public hearing was always held two to seven days before the meeting to vote to approve the budget. In March, 2015, the historic snow fall that occurred between the end of January and the end of February necessitated many budget meeting schedule changes including scheduling the required public hearing on the budget and the same night the budget would be voted on. The same schedule was adopted for the FY2017 and FY2018 budget. This could be cured by holding the public hearing before the meeting in which the SC votes on the budget.

Comment: Maintain current staffing levels, i.e. no staff cuts, and put a hold on funding new positions that are not student-facing unless we have new revenue.

- **Response:** In the words of former Superintendent Irene Cornish, every employee of Chelsea Public Schools, regardless of position, is responsible for the education of students. In other words, all of our employees are considered student-facing. The objective was to trim the existing budget by 3%, or \$2.7M, by analyzing caseloads, class sizes, and listening to school administrators describe what their priorities were to strengthen Tier I instruction and continued progress with school improvement plans.

Comment: We are not cutting any administrators

- **Response:** One administrator position, which was to be used as an administrator intern position for teachers who wished to train to enter administration, was cut. This represents a 3% reduction for school-based administrators, the same percentage reduction proposed for teachers.

Comment: Majority of cuts are coming from special education.

- **Response:** It is true that a reduction of seven special education inclusion specialist positions are taken in the middle school and one vacant districtwide BCBA specialist representing less than one-third of the reduction in teacher positions. The decision to reduce the number of inclusion teachers in the middle grades was as a result of analyzing and equalizing caseloads of inclusion specialists throughout the elementary grades. The following table indicates the impact of this change:

Comment: Majority of cuts are coming from special education.

School	Inclusion enrollment	Inclusion teachers FY17	Student/teacher ratio	Projected Inclusion teachers FY18	Student/teacher ratio
Hooks	53	3	17.7	3	17.7
Berkowitz	46	3	15.3	3	15.3
Sokolowski	52	3	17.3	3	17.3
Kelly	44	3	14.7	3	14.7
Wright	56	7	8.0	4	14.0
Browne	49	3	16.3	3	16.3
Clark Ave.	61	8	7.6	4	15.3

- We are also adding two special needs teachers, one at the Hooks (Grade 3/4 Learning Center) and one at the ELC (K Social Communications class.)
- When increases to special education tuition, translations, and transportation are taken into account, our special education spending is being increased by \$948K, the second largest increase in FY2018 after salaries and benefits.

Comment: Some students are only borderline inclusion students that are supported in the co-teaching model.

- **Response:** The inclusion/co-teaching model is still supported under this plan. We are not eliminating co-teaching. Inclusion teachers will manage a case load of 14-18 students. Inclusion teachers should be consulting with classroom teachers to identify instructional strategies the classroom teacher can use to meet the needs a particular students. Time is also provided for the inclusion teacher to provide Tier II or Tier III support to individual students.

Comment: Reduction of academic coaches and co-teachers hit at the core of Tier I instruction

- **Response:** We have proposed reducing the number of coaches in the elementary grades from 27 to 23, but add an ELL Coach at the high school for a net reduction of 3. This was recommended after a caseload analysis. The following table indicates the impact of this change:

Comment: Reduction of academic coaches and co-teachers hit at the core of Tier I instruction

School	Teachers	Academic Coaches FY17	Teacher/Coach ratio	Academic Coaches FY18	Teacher/Coach ratio
ELC	54	5.00	10.80	3.00	18.00
Hooks	39	2.25	17.33	2.25	17.33
Berkowitz	37	2.25	16.44	2.25	16.44
Sokolowski	41	2.25	18.22	2.25	18.22
Kelly	38	2.25	16.89	2.25	16.89
Wright	36	2.66	13.53	2.00	18.00
Browne	42	2.66	15.79	2.00	21.00
Clark Ave.	42	2.68	15.67	2.00	21.00
CHS	121	4.00	30.25	5.00	24.20

- In FY17, Teachers per Coach ranges from 10.80 to 30.25, a variance of 19.45 teachers. The FY18 proposal creates a more equitable distribution with the range at 16.4 to 24.2 Teachers per Coach.

Comment: Do not cut the intervention programs that students need, restore the intervention program

- **Response:** The core of our intervention program, Title 1 teachers for math and literacy, remain fully funded. What is being cut at the high school and the middle schools, are funds for part-time tutors to work with referred students during the school day using a pull-out model. This decision was made, in part, because it had become increasingly difficult in these grades to hire qualified tutors. This was not the case at the Mary C. Burke Complex and the ELC and the program remains fully funded at these locations.

Recommendation

- My recommendation to the School Committee is to stay the course for now. If, at the conclusion of the State budget process, we find we have additional funds to budget, we can reconsider, not only the cuts we are proposing, but also other proposals made by Principals that could not be considered at this time.
- The public hearing speakers passionately advocated for keeping all spending as is. This is not possible when under the mandate to present a balanced budget. Restoring cuts at this point would require in-kind cuts in other areas of the budget. The cuts proposed to balance the budget were not undertaken lightly, but recommended after careful analysis.