

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. Present: School Board Members John Harmon, Tony Clements, Cindy Bennett, Joseph Saulnier, and Steve Scarfo; Superintendent Terry Leatherman; Business Administrator Marjorie Whitmore; Iber Holmes Gove Middle School Principal Tom Waldron; Director of Health and Wellness Samantha Horrigan; Acting Director of Technology Matthew Clifton; Executive Director of Student Support Services Jodi Gutterman, Raymond High School Principal Peter Dannible (6:22 PM).

Proof of Posting: It was noted that the meeting was properly posted.

Pledge of Allegiance: All those in attendance stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Leatherman and Ms. Whitmore reviewed their responses to questions from the previous night's budget meeting with the Board.

Public Input: Public input was opened at 6:10 PM. Mr. Harmon noted that public input would be open for 30 minutes. If anyone arrives within that timeframe and would like to speak, they will be allowed to do so. There was no public input forthcoming.

#### 2024-25 Budget Work Session: Department Presentations

Technology: Mr. Clifton reviewed the proposed technology budget with the School Board. During discussion:

- Mr. Clements asked if the district is good with Chromebooks. Mr. Clifton stated that we are on a cycle - all the Chromebooks that we have right now are within their life cycle. Next year, districtwide Chromebooks and supplies are in the budget.

Iber Holmes Gove Middle School: Mr. Waldron reviewed the proposed IHGMS budget with the School Board. During discussion:

- Mr. Harmon asked that the salary and benefits in the proposed budget for guidance be changed to reflect the fact that one of the counselors has retired, so the numbers will not be based on that specific individual.
- Mr. Harmon asked for, over the last year, any co-curricular we didn't have participation for and that we didn't run, for both the high school and the middle school.
- Mr. Harmon asked if the amount budgeted for substitutes should be significantly less since there are not as many staffing shortages as the previous two years, and the elementary and middle schools lines are not as high. Ms. Whitmore stated she could lower it but she would be concerned about unforeseen events.
- Mr. Harmon asked what the printing line of \$2,200 goes for. Ms. Whitmore stated that the line is used for agenda books for 4th and 5th grade and some other items. Mr. Waldron said he will look into it to be sure they're being used.

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- Ms. Whitmore will provide to the Board the cost per pupil for supplies that make up the Gen Ed Supplies line.
- Mr. Waldron stated that he will look into whether the items being purchased through the periodicals line are still needed or if a free, online version is an option for some.
- Mr. Clements asked if the Parent Core Group can fund assemblies. Mr. Waldron stated that he may go to them depending on the cost. Mr. Saulnier stated he would like to fund the assembly line.
- Mr. Saulnier stated that he feels a foreign language teacher should be added at the middle school, as other area middle schools have a foreign language teacher and he feels it puts our students at a disadvantage.

Mr. Leatherman reviewed the proposed elimination of FCS, math lab, and reading lab positions at IHGMS. Mr. Scarfo stated he's not in favor of losing any teachers. He stated he agrees with Mr. Saulnier to add foreign language.

Mr. Saulnier asked Mr. Waldron how successful the math labs are. Mr. Waldron stated it's important to provide that extra time to children who need it. Most of the curriculum is taught in regular classes and it's reinforced in the lab. It's getting them in the practice of reading it, and the more practice they have, the better. There is value in it, but the current model could probably be fine-tuned. Mr. Harmon asked for test score data for the few years prior to the establishment of those positions and after. Mr. Scarfo asked that it be cohort data. Mr. Harmon stated that he won't support adding foreign language and that some cuts do need to be made at the middle school for there to be a chance of the budget passing.

Mr. Harmon asked that the music teachers' salary and benefits be reflected as half at middle school and half at high school in the music lines specifically.

Raymond High School: Mr. Dannible reviewed the proposed RHS budget with the School Board. During discussion:

- Administration will review the FCS/health salary line and any adjustments will be brought to the Board next week.
- Mr. Harmon asked why the department head line is being increased \$2,750, from the cost of five department heads to six. Ms. Whitmore stated that a budget discrepancy this year meant that each of them received less than budgeted, so the addition is to bring them back up next year.
- Mr. Harmon asked that the Board be provided with which teachers/subjects currently do the 6th period stipend.
- Mr. Harmon asked how many students have used Edmentum and had success. Mr. Dannible stated that 26 used the program over the summer, all but one recovered at least one credit, with a total of 36 credits recovered. Mr. Harmon asked how that compared to traditional summer school and if we charge a fee for Edmentum. Mr. Dannible stated there is no fee for Edmentum.

- Mr. Clements asked what kind of camera is being used in photography class. Mr. Dannible stated it's Canon EOS Rebel T-7. Mr. Clements asked if ordering less than originally planned this year will result in students having to share or wait. Mr. Dannible stated the goal is to have a camera for everybody. Right now there is only one class sharing cameras, which happens to be because of a scheduling conflict, so two classes are running simultaneously. Mr. Clements suggested purchasing T-5's instead to be able to purchase more cameras.
- Mr. Harmon asked that the Board receive information as to how many computers we currently have for CAD and how many we're looking to purchase. Mr. Clements asked where we ended up with Fusion 360 computers. Mr. Leatherman stated he will look into that.
- Mr. Harmon asked why the school is looking at scheduling only two AP courses next year and asked if more can be added.
- Mr. Saulnier asked if there is a Spanish IV or V class. Mr. Dannible stated there is not.
- Mr. Harmon stated that regarding cocurriculars, fall spirit is being held this year for the first time for a cost of \$900 or \$950 and it wasn't in the budget. He stated he hopes it's not being added to next year since it wasn't planned for this year. Mr. Saulnier asked how many students participated. Mr. Dannible stated he believes 14. Mr. Leatherman will confirm that.

Student Services and Behavior and Wellness: Ms. Gutterman and Ms. Horrigan reviewed the proposed Student Services budget with the School Board. During discussion:

- Mr. Saulnier stated he's not sure he wants to lower the budgeted amount for contracted services and then find ourselves needing them. Mr. Leatherman stated they've had success hiring behavior coaches as part of the wagepool, so he thinks they would be okay.
- During discussion, Ms. Gutterman stated that there is no radius for meeting schooling/residency needs for homeless status students, and the obligations for homeless status students could be multiple years.
- Costs for foster students are listed under Special Education Tuition Public. Court placements are listed under Private.
- There are currently 19 out of district students with placement costs varying from \$46,000 to \$220,000, not including transportation.
- Ms. Bennett asked if special education students have a general goal, such as Portrait of a Graduate. Mr. Leatherman stated that the typical special education student should be striving for the Portrait of a Graduate, and the non-typical special education students have their own individual goals.
- Ms. Whitmore stated that the four positions which are currently funded by ESSERS are included in the summary by department in the Student Services budget.

Regarding preschool, Ms. Gutterman stated that the biggest question is whether to stay as a 50/50 program or make it just special education. Board policy caps preschool at 15 students per class. With current referrals they will be over that amount based on our inclusive model and the policy. One proposal is to continue with the two inclusive classrooms and build in an additional classroom which

would increase a preschool teacher. Or, increase a teacher, keep the program inclusive, and add in a self-contained classroom.

Mr. Saulnier stated that years ago they were told they could either do a restricted or a 50/50, and asked if Ms. Gutterman is now saying we can do a hybrid. Ms. Gutterman stated not within an individual class, but within the program itself.

Mr. Clements asked if there is a minimum class size for self contained classrooms. Ms. Gutterman stated there is no minimum.

Mr. Saulnier stated he likes the model we have now and asked Ms. Gutterman her opinion. Ms. Gutterman stated that philosophically she believes in inclusion, but she recognizes that we're in a budget with other increases. She would like to continue the current model and look at the policy, do our best next year, and the following year consider an additional teacher. There's also a space conversation if an additional teacher is added.

Mr. Clements stated he thinks inclusion works both ways, for the typical students to interact with identified as well.

During discussion, Ms. Gutterman noted that an additional teacher is not reflected in the current budget.

Mr. Harmon stated that years ago the classes used to mix three- and four-year olds, and asked why that's not the case anymore. Ms. Gutterman stated that she believes it's because developmentally three-year olds and four-year olds are very different.

Mr. Harmon stated that if they're having a conversation about adding a teacher, they don't have a location for that teacher. Ms. Saulnier suggested considering moving the entirety of preschool back to LRES.

Mr. Saulnier suggested considering three teachers in two classrooms. Ms. Gutterman stated that would be very cramped and she wouldn't advise it.

Mr. Saulnier suggested that just one teacher be located at LRES.

Mr. Harmon stated that they don't yet know the number of next year's three-year olds, and so they don't know if they have a program next year. Mr. Leatherman stated that the worst case scenario would be two classes at the current location for four-year olds, and one at LRES for four-year olds.

During discussion, Ms. Gutterman stated that there is no waitlist this year for preschool. Ms. Saulnier asked why there's no waitlist. Ms. Gutterman stated that there was a delay in contacting some families, so possibly they've found other options.

Mr. Harmon asked what they need for information to move the conversation along the next time they have it. Mr. Saulnier asked for one-time expenditures. Mr. Harmon stated if we add a third preschool teacher, where would they go, and how many would be enrolled in three classes.

Mr. Saulnier suggested that maybe the Board should change the policy to 16 to make a 50/50 split of identified and non-identified students even.

Mr. Saulnier stated that if they went to self-contained classrooms, there may be parents who would choose to go out of district for their preschool program.

Ms. Bennett stated that even with 15 students, half identified and half non-identified, that's a lot for a teacher, even with help.

Mr. Scarfo asked to confirm that there is not a waitlist for preschool. Ms. Gutterman stated she can look at that.

Adjournment: MOTION: Joseph Saulnier moved, seconded by Tony Clements, to adjourn the meeting. Voted unanimously in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Heywood,  
School Board Clerk