

# BROCKTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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The Honorable Bill Carpenter  
**Chair/Mayor of Brockton**

Thomas J. Minichiello, Jr.  
**Vice-Chair**

Kathleen A. Smith, JD  
**Secretary/Superintendent  
of Schools**



## Committee Members

Joyce J. Asack  
Mark S. D'Agostino  
Brett Gormley  
Thomas J. Minichiello, Jr.  
Lisa M. Plant  
Judy A. Sullivan  
Timothy J. Sullivan

April 21, 2017

TO: Brockton School Committee

FROM: Thomas J. Minichiello, Jr., Chair  
Aldo Petronio, Chief Budget Officer

RE: **Report of the April 20, 2017 Finance Subcommittee Meeting**

The Finance Subcommittee of the Brockton School Committee met on Thursday, April 20, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the Azure IRC at Brockton High School.

Present: Mr. Minichiello, Mr. Petronio, Mr. D'Agostino, Mr. Gormley, Ms. Plant,  
Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Sullivan, Superintendent Smith

Absent: Joyce Asack

Also Present: M. Bandis, S. Terrasi, E. Cancell, J. Saba-Maguire, M. O'Brien

Mr. Minichiello opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. and asked Superintendent Smith to begin the discussion.

Before beginning the budget discussion the Superintendent shared that grief counseling was offered at the high school Wednesday morning in response to Tuesday's tragic car accident that resulted in the death of one BHS student and injured two others. She said the school department is working with the families of all of the boys who were involved in the accident.

The Superintendent presented a request from parents of some of the middle school students who will be competing at National History Day in Washington D.C., for financial assistance for their expenses. She said student expenses have been paid for by the district in the past. She will send the packet of information to the committee on Friday.



The Superintendent requested approval to hire a substitute school adjustment counselor to cover for a middle school counselor who was selected for the administrative intern program, and pay this substitute the \$125/day rate, the position would last for eight weeks. She said this is an experienced adjustment counselor and she does not want this middle school position to go unfilled. After a brief discussion, Mr. Minichiello acknowledged that a vote to approve was not necessary but he asked the committee to vote to have it on record.

**Mr. D'Agostino moved to allow the Superintendent to pay the \$125/day rate for the South Middle School adjustment counselor substitute for the duration of the administration internship, the motion was seconded by Ms. Sullivan.**

Voted: to approve the motion 5 - 0 - 1 (Mr. Sullivan abstained).

### **FY18 Budget**

Advocacy Update - the Superintendent reported that she has two meetings coming up, one with Jeff Wulfson from the DESE who has requested a meeting to take a look at our budget, and another with State Auditor Suzanne Bump to look at the low-income calculation as it relates to direct certification.

Mr. Minichiello added that the Mayor has met with Lt. Governor Polito with respect to the state's arbitrary formulas and he is hopeful that may produce additional funds.

School Closures Cost Analysis (handout) - Mr. Petronio prepared a cost analysis showing what would be saved by closing each middle school; closing West and Plouffe was not considered because they have the largest populations. She explained that the biggest savings from closing a school comes from teaching positions, which are already included in the proposed 163 certified staff RIFs. Any additional savings would be realized through administration and energy costs. She stated that if a middle school is not closed this year they will most likely need to close one next year. Ms. Plant said if we are seriously considering closing a middle school the committee needs to see numbers - the capacity of each school, the number of available seats at each school and the projected class sizes. The Superintendent said she will provide that information.

Closing the Davis middle school was discussed, approximately 200 grade 6 and 7 students would need to be absorbed into the district. This would target twelve teaching positions but not bring additional savings.

FY18 Budget Barometer - The Superintendent asked the committee to review the newest budget barometer, which reflects \$16 million in cost savings and cuts to balance the budget. She said May 15<sup>th</sup> is a critical date due to contractual obligations and she will need the committee to vote on a budget at the next finance subcommittee meeting in order to allow time to prepare RIF notices. She said that although she will continue to work with the state for additional funding, it is critical that the committee works to close the \$16 million gap. Discussion included the following items:

- Mr. D'Agostino asked for more information about Attendance Officers and Central non-union administrative positions, the Superintendent responded. She informed the committee that not being filled are the deputy superintendent and corresponding confidential administrative assistant position, and explained how "red circled" administrators affect the budget and RIFs.
- The Superintendent explained that paraprofessional positions will be assigned to buildings, not classrooms, and used at the principal's discretion.
- Proposed elimination of ten administrative assistant positions. Also, the elimination of overtime and bringing in part-time help will reduce the hours for registration at the parent center.



- The Project Grads program has been running at a deficit of \$120,000, the Superintendent has proposed cutting the program. Ms. Plant disagreed with the recommendation, she would like the district and committee to look for other options to save money and keep the program. Mr. Gormley asked the Superintendent to provide a breakdown of the program. The Superintendent will ask Mary Read to come to the finance subcommittee meeting.
- Mr. Gormley asked for an update on bringing back SPED out-of-district placements; Ms. Mason responded they are moving forward and have a few more students they are currently working to bring back. She reported that a site visit took place yesterday, and if the building is approved we can use it for our 45-day placements. As out-of-district placements these can cost anywhere from \$8,500 to \$15,000, plus transportation.
- Mr. D'Agostino asked how many of the 163 (+9) certified positions were actual classroom teachers, the Superintendent responded at least 150. He said "knowing what we know now, it seems that there is nothing else to do."

Non-Net Transportation Costs - Mr. Petronio said non-negotiable are 52 vans to transport special education students, with respect to general education students the city is only required to fund transportation for elementary students, Brockton currently needs 31 buses. He said if the school department is level funded in this budget there will not be money to pay for any additional things that may come up. The committee talked briefly about moving toward the neighborhood school model and requiring students to register for the school closest to their home; Mr. Thomas said this is already part of the school assignment policy.

In closing, the Superintendent said the community needs to make a decision about how they fund the schools (with respect to taxes). She said she is not happy about this budget but feels it will allow the district to get a handle on the budget, it needs to be stabilized. Mr. Minichiello asked how much will be gained by closing one of the middle schools and whether these funds can be used to bring back teachers and programs; the Superintendent said about \$1 million would become available.

Seeing no further discussion, Mr. Sullivan moved to adjourn; the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Handouts: FY18 Budget Barometer (#4)  
School Closing Cost Analysis

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