

## 2005-12-13 School Committee

### Budget – Part 2

How can we save money? Tried to be reasonable. Reducing really small classes might save us 30K – that's not a likely saving place.

What are our priorities – center circles:

- 1) Safety
  - 2) Core Academics
  - 3) Competitive Pay
  - 4) Support for all learners
  - 5) Educate the whole child
- Leadership and leadership support.  
If we had to do this again, how would we do it? It evolved over the years. A thorough review is worth doing
  - Remediation and intervention.
  - Special ed out of district –  
may be opportunities to save by bringing students back to Arlington. Save money and better integrate into community. Not talking about providing less services to kids. This could be a true example of win/win.
  - Transportation.  
Need to do comprehensive review of what we do. Bishop bus is an example
  - Grants Title I and Title II.  
We get ELL and metco grants. What most districts do is that the grant money fills in holes around the budget. Also includes things that are nice to have. In our budget, we don't have luxury items. As we move through tight times, the nice to haves that we may have now will go away. We need to target our grant income towards the things we need.
  - ACE.  
We cannot be hostage to the budget. In the past, this has been cut and been on and off the chopping block. We owe it to the gifted students to stretch them and challenge them as much as our commitment to the learners who need more attention to attain the basic skills. It is our obligation to meet needs of all students. Issue is how to expand it in cost effective and affordable way.
  - ELA teaching load.  
This is a contractual issue. At high school, our English Language teachers teach 4 classes rather than 5. Rational is that the assignments require extra work to grade and comment. In last contract, there is a clause that says as of 9/1/2006, the teachers may be required to teach 5. It is not Nate's intention to use this to reduce our staff.

- Nursing.  
This could be a case study in doing things the old way or a new way. He supports full time nurses. It is his feeling that if we try to do it in the old-fashioned way, it will not survive 5 years on the cutting block. This is not sustainable. He is 100% behind the need. There have to be other ways to fill the need. We must find those ways.

If there are people watching, and their area of concern is on this list, we've ruined their night. There is nothing that has been decided at this point. There will be ongoing conversations over the next several months. These are all difficult decisions with no easy answers. Budget cuts will not come as a surprise to those directly affected.

If we don't deal with these issues, we'll end up just laying off a bunch of teachers each year, which is not a good thing either.

Leadership structure.

We currently spend 1,590,952 on supervision. It does not include principals. It includes dept heads, curriculum leads, etc. What is a reasonable number for this? The Harvard public schools is a very low spending district. They are notorious for this. How many supervisors per student? Depends on principals being instructional leaders. They have more secretarial support to do that. In Harvard, the supervision number is 631,352. This is not a recommendation – they are not a parallel district, but it gives us some sense that there could be differences in how we organize ourselves.

When came here, the leadership structure puzzled Nate. Everyone asked gave a different answer. Expected to see it working the worst in math. Math had the least \$ being spent. 120 employees under one person. In Nate's opinion, math program is very well articulated, maybe because it's from one person. This year, the mentoring program is very well structured and should be very effective. We've asked Kathy to do a lot, and she's done it very well.

There is not a clear correlation that having smaller ratios to supervise produces better results.

EJ – how much does dept head teach

Dept heads teach 0-1 classes.

There are lead teachers and coordinators which have different responsibilities

English 7-12

Reading/Writing K-5

6 is in limbo

Physical Education – supervises 13 people – teaches 1 course

English director might teach 1 course and supervise 30 people  
Math might teach 1 and supervise 117 people

Foreign languages – consider a core subject – 1 lead teacher who teaches 3 classes

Performing arts have more supervision than foreign language

We haven't looked at these ratios in terms of priorities – is physical ed of 13:1 make more sense than English of 30:1.

Patchwork probably came about as people were hired.

Jeff – this is an area with large opportunity

Marty – it is true that the current structure grew out of hodgepodge history

Sue – it is important to do this analysis to move from good to great. Management has to feel good about what's going on.

## **Remediation and Intervention**

Commitment to kids who are struggling should not waiver in good times or bad.

We have 8 different programs. We have kids who will see 3 or 4 different people who help with reading.

On Monday student may see one person, on Tuesday another, and on Friday a third. None of them may be tied into classroom teacher.

Nate presented a chart representing the current staffing:

We are spending 3,470,949 across 8 different programs. The kids deserve and need it, but the current structure may not be optimal for their learning or for the budget. There are 96 FTE's involved. Nate can't say who supervises those people.

Some questions:

who coordinates

Does it make sense to have 8 departments for serving the same children

Is it optimal that only 36% is for content certified experts

If we spend 3.5 million, and do it well, we will save a fortune. If we can address kids issues in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, it is worth it. If we do this well, we can save after one year.

## Out of district spending

Our goal must remain to provide high level of services to children in need

The district has an above average # of children out of district

Many parents prefer a quality in district program for their children

It would be a win/win to bring them back into the district.

We currently spend 3,913,103 for tuition, and 497,236 for transportation

Avg cost/student: 47,146. Transportation 5991.

Savings if 5 students moved in house (25K/student) 125,000 tuition, 30K in transportation

Savings if 5% improvement in cost effectiveness: 195655 tuition, 24K transportation

Sean – it would be better if the students were back in Arlington. Doesn't seem like there is any controversy here – it would be great to improve this.

Susan – how many kids could be served in the district? For instance, are some at residential that could not be brought back. BJ: probably 80/20 day students vs. residential.

Marty – anecdotally, parents wanted their kids out of district because there was impression that would be better served out of district.

Nate – there are a lot of factors. Some parents prefer out of district. Sometimes space is tight. A classroom that can accommodate 25 typical kids might accommodate 3-5 special needs kids. These are difficult and complex kids. If we could get quality programs at reasonable prices, makes sense to do it externally. The needs are so demanding that it can stress the core school system. This is a significant increase in the complexity of running a school. It seems for the kids sake, the budget sake, the system's sake, things have changed and we will have to change.

EJ – what is total count of out of district? BJ – 93 total

Jeff – we've discussed that we have to get it down, but now how we get it down. If we can improve the quality of the services we offer then we may be able to succeed.

Nate – there's an investment piece to this – it is a big investment to hire staff. It will not be a payback in the first year.

Suzanne – we have tried this in the past. Special classroom at hardy, early intervention kindergarden at Stratton. Space has been an issue.

Nate – space is always an issue, but there may be ways to make it work. Need to be creative. Maybe some carpentry could solve the problem.

## Transportation

APS Personnel	305,677
Contracted Svcs	379,000
Traffic supervisors	205,284
Equipment	????
Total	889,961

This is a big number – close to 1 million. Are there ways to rethink it? Different towns do it different ways

Here’s an example of worst/worst case – legal requirements only (no bishop bus)  
Redeploy traffic supervisors

Aps personnel	207,753
Contracted svcs	379,000
Traffic supervisors	102,642
Equipment	???
Total cost	689,395

## 10:46pm Grants

Not every \$ of every grant is going to the best place – the core needs

Title 1	195,000
Title 2a	39,500
Title 3	47,000
Metco	90,000

## Ace in the middle school

The ACE parents are a quiet group who generally don’t make waves. Periodically, they come and ask how can these programs be increased.

## Non-core classes

	FTE	Cost
Art	2	100,179
Consumer Science	2.6	135,075
Health	1	63,014
Industrial arts	4.0	250,655
Performing arts	2.8	137,460
Phys ed	4.0	218,790
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>905,173</b>
ACE	1	50,073
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>955,246</b>
<b>ACE as % of non core</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>

Are these 20 times more important than ACE (that's ratio of 5%).

Could this be expanded with other courses – course in robotics, physics, literature. Lot of discussion about what these courses could be.

We will be spending 950K at middle school educating beyond the core legal requirements.

## ELA teaching load

Value of 22.75 classes

FTE's	4.55
Avg salary	45,000
Avg health insurance	8,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>243,425</b>

Marty – if there is more support available, does that make the teaching of English easier – does it make it less onerous to have the extra class.

Nate – 5<sup>th</sup> class is going to represent 25 more papers to grade

## Nursing

No one questions the desire for full time nursing. It is very hard to put a price on student safety.

It is a fact that there are kids with life-threatening issues.

Debate is not whether we need full-time coverage. It is how best to provide that coverage.

In many conversations with parents, the primary reason for full time nurses is emergencies – a student going into shock. If this happens when there is no nurse there, it is a problem.

We don't put fire trucks in every neighborhood. Sometimes we have to call in resources from other communities.

No one is suggesting that we have rn's work more than a full day. But it is true that there is activity before and after school, with less supervision. No one is suggesting bumping nursing to 8 hour day to cover these times.

How do we increase the coverage and reduce the cost?

Current situation	450,000 on nursing
National average cvg	221,000
Full time nursing	559,848
National avg plus 2 full time emergency medical staff (includes real time gps and central dispatch). This includes extending people 1 hour before and 1 hour after.	277,140

Marty – looking at what is problem rather than what is the solution.

## **No easy choices**

There is no fat or waste in the current budget

There are opportunities to look at it differently.

On Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6-9pm will be focusing budget discussion on these 8 areas. Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup>, Nate and staff will work on finished budget

Sue – in order to get the Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>, what is going to happen to help us get to where we need to be on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Nate – it will be internal work by my staff to try to gather necessary info. At meeting more info will be available and we can discuss in more detail.

Nate – the only thing the finance committee needs from us are commitments that we will live within our budget. They do not need details on how we will do this

The committee and public will have at least 3 opportunities to discuss these issues

Jan 3

Jan 10

Jan 24

March 14

Marty – the preliminary bottom line number will have some solid basis

Nate – you will be able to see every line that adds to the total

Consent agenda

11-4pm on Friday, there will be a contract negotiation workshop – similar to what Jeff and Suzanne did over the summer. With Arlington Education Association and full school committee – interest based bargaining