

**Hingham School Committee
Joint ACES**

February 10, 2021

7:00 PM

Remote meeting via Zoom:

Dial-in number:

Meeting ID:

Passcode:

Website: <https://zoom.us/join>

Members present: Kerry Ni, Carlos Da Silva, Libby Lewiecki, Liza O'Reilly, Michelle Ayer, Nes Correnti, Jen Benham
Admin: Paul Austin, John Ferris

ACES members present: Dave Anderson, Andrew McElaney, Evan Sheehan, Eryn Kelley, George Danis

1. Call to Order.

The school Committee was called to order at 7:07 PM.

2. To attend and participate in a joint session with Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee.

Dave Anderson Chair of ACES reported that the ACES subcommittee makes a recommendation to the AdCom regarding the school budget and is here tonight to discuss their thoughts.

Evan Sheehan expressed that we are in a position to find creative ways to fill a \$7M shortfall in the overall town budget.

A. McElaney has not been persuaded that the Recovery Budget does not include more items than what we need to get people up to where we were before the pandemic. The presentation on SPED did not present data to suggest the extra positions are needed. Nor was there data to point to needing more positions for regular ED. He requested data to bring to AdCom.

Dr. LaBillois advised that there is historic data showing discrepancies in achievement in subgroups.

E. Sheehan this is not like the DPW budget that can cover hours at the transfer station. Education has intangibles. Have to assume positive intent from Dr. Austin and Dr. LaBillois to tell us what they need.

Kerry Ni added that the SPED subcommittee has discussed the budget in depth. This is common sense that academically and socially emotionally children are suffering during a pandemic. Referrals are up requiring more specialized instruction to close the gaps.

Da Anderson opined that professional educators have anecdotal information about negative impacts but that asking for data is a fair request.

Dr. Austin concurred. We have exceptional educators. When a child goes on summer break there is a regression. Our students have missed a lot of time since March. We absolutely expect a regression and we need robust intervention. There has been a much greater request for referrals for special ed. 40% of parents are concerned that their children have regressed. We anticipate those who already have IEPs will have even greater needs, and there are more who will be on IEPs than before.

E, Sheehan reference Dr LaBillois presentation showing achievement gap for SPED and other groups of students in MCAS.

Dr. Austin will add those suggestions to the presentation.

G. Danis asked what if we don't have enough additional people? Advised we make sure we are asking for enough so we don't come back next year and have to say we fell short. Asked for data in laymans' terms. If we go forward with an override, we need to convince $\frac{2}{3}$ people of the town that the override is necessary that the spending is appropriate.

E. Kelley explained the budget like a Venn Diagram: COVID recovery/social-emotional/right sizing of budget. She referenced our per pupil spend and student/teacher ratio. She trusts the administrators that when they say they need x they need x. But the community must come together.

E. Sheehan encouraged the administration to make sure the budget is absolutely complete so we don't have to come back in following years.

School Committee comments:

C. DaSilva thanked ACES and ADCOM. He is grateful that we were finally able to hire a Human Resource Director, but reminded us that the Director of Fine Arts and Additional Assistant Principal are not currently in the budget.

L.O'Reilly reminded us of other items to consider including the \$400,000 of tech in capital which should be moved to the operating budget. She suggested establishing an override committee to look at all of the factors for FY 23/24. Using the Fund Balance and CARES reimbursements for FY 22 will give us time to prepare for an override for 2023/2024. There is a precedent from FY 11 and FY 12, which used fund balance to weather the current situation. Fund balance was considerably lower at that time than now but ADCOM advised using fund balance for operating funds.

In this budget we have a request for a study to create a plan. The Town Master Plan is to be presented March 8. It includes recommendations regarding economic development and climate change, town operations, and capital projects.

Questions and comments from the public ensued.

ACES will schedule their next meeting fro after the Feb 22 school committee meeting.

The School Committee will discuss potentially voting on the budget on Feb 22.

5. On a motion made by M.Ayer and seconded by J. Benham it was voted to adjourn the School Committee at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Libby Lewiecki, School Committee Secretary