

Budget Subcommittee

March 8, 2011

A Budget Subcommittee meeting was held on Tuesday, March 8, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. in the 2ⁿ. Floor Conference Room, NAGE Building. Present were: Ms. Isola, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Lebo Mrs. Dwyer, Mayor Koch and Mrs. Mahoney, Chair. Also present were: Dr. DeCristofaro, Mr. Mullaney, Ms. Colleen Roberts, Ms. Judith Todd, Mrs. Edith Hughes, and Mrs. Tefta Burrelli, Clerk.

Mrs. Mahoney called the meeting to order. This meeting was called to go over options for the full day Kindergarten program and to review the answers to the questions the Committee previously asked. Mr. Mullaney reviewed the following charts:

Income Eligibility Guidelines Extended for Use During the 2010-2011 School Year. These rates are in effect until June 30, 2011.

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Sliding Fee Scale for Full day Kindergarten 2011-2012. In order to receive grant funding, we would have to follow this graph.

The Percent Discount by Income Level for a Family of Four. Those families making less than \$24,636 would get 100% free tuition and the family of four making up to \$98,556 would have a 25% discount on tuition.

The Percent Discount by Income Level for a Family of Six: For a family of six, those families making less than \$32,532 would receive 100% free tuition and those families of six making up to \$130,104 would receive a 25% discount on tuition.

Free and Reduced/Low Income Figures for Elementary Schools: This chart showed the total figures for those students/families on free and reduced income. System wide, Quincy is at 44.38% free and reduced level. As of January 27, Quincy is up at 45.54% free and reduced. We cannot do income verification on these families.

Funding Sources: The Quality Full Day Kindergarten grant program supports high quality educational programs for children in full day kindergarten classrooms. This grant helps to improve the quality of curriculum and classroom environment; provides continuity of curriculum across preschool, kindergarten and grades one through three and helps in developing other programmatic component of kindergarten. Full day kindergarten is defined as minimum five instructional hours, five days/week, 180 days/school year.

We use the funds to provide instructional aides to support full day kindergarten and to provide professional development and CDA training for paraprofessionals to align with the National Association for the Education of Young Children guidelines and the NAEYC annual report fees.

Quincy received the grant for \$261,000 which is used to fund 15 paraprofessionals. If we use the sliding scale, this grant would not be available to us.

Foundation Budget: Mr. Mullaney then went on to explain the Foundation Budget and what would happen if we switched back to half day kindergarten. Our base foundation would be \$1.6 million dollars which we will get no matter what happens. It would change if we do anything but full day K. If you went to half day K or mix of full day and half day, you will lose the number of students.

Kindergarten Scenarios: Mr. Mullaney went on to give four different Kindergarten Scenarios – the costs for Free full day K, ½ day K/ 1 FDK/per building estimated tuition is \$4,000/ FDK 100% pay tuition estimated at \$1,500 per student.

Mrs. Dwyer said she thought that it is unrealistic that a certain population can afford \$4,000 and highly unlikely that they would pay \$1,500. Mr. McCarthy agreed that \$4,000 is expensive and it would be tough to get. The \$1,500 is also an expensive number. Nor, does he think we are going to have enough time before March 29 to implement these fees. If we went with the tuitions and we didn't get the funds, we will have issues with the budget.

Mrs. Lebo agreed that \$4,000 and \$1,500 is a moving target. We don't know what the cost is going to be. We would be in serious deficit if we didn't get that money.

Mr. Mullaney explained the ARRA funding. The \$100,000 we received was used to help in the shortfall in the teacher line. We are able to carry over the \$1.3 million to use next year. We voted to carry that over in 2012 in our budget. The increase in Chapter 70 is \$2 million. We have \$3.3 million to work with to offset the impending hit on the step raises we owe the teachers.

Mrs. Mahoney inquired about the changes with the Common Core. Mrs. Roberts said that Massachusetts has adopted a Pre-K curriculum. Kindergarten has to meet 92 standards. This is a lot to expect for teachers to fit all of that in a half day. When students get out of Kindergarten, it is expected that they are ready for first and second grades.

Mrs. Mahoney agreed and said that our leaders make these expectations and then we are tied to a budget. We're going to be losing funding from our foundation money should we go to half day with one full day Kindergarten. This is long term cost to a short term moment in our budget. When we talk about putting a fee to something, we don't know if we can collect.

The expectations don't change. The state expects that they are ready for first grade and it is expected that they're ready for second grade. This is not a luxury because they are getting up to speed, our expectations are much higher. Retention is a part of the core curriculum. Mrs. Roberts said we would have to start the children where they are when they come in and work very diligently to bring them up to a level where they should be.

At this time, Mr. McCarthy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Lebo, to leave Kindergarten as is for the year 2011-2012 with no tuition.

Ms. Isola said this study began during budget time last year. She wanted to do a full examination of what the possibilities were to charge tuition for a non-mandated program. She is aware of the educational benefits for Full Day Kindergarten. She almost wished that it would be mandated across the state. She felt she needed to do due diligence to see what those numbers would be. Having looked at all of these numbers over the past week, there just didn't seem to her to be an equitable way to handle this and charge the tuition. Through this exploration she is ready to vote.

Mrs. Lebo added that as a resident of the City of Quincy, she is proud of the fact that we offer full day Kindergarten across the board.

On a roll call vote, the motion to keep free full day Kindergarten passed 6-0. Mrs. Bragg was absent.

On motion by Mr. McCarthy, seconded by Ms. Isola, the Committee adjourned at 5:37 p.m. The ayes have it.