

Budget Subcommittee

March 9, 2011

A Budget Subcommittee meeting was held on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in the F.W. Parker Elementary School. Present were Ms. Isola, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Bragg, Mrs. Lebo and Mrs. Mahoney, Chair. Also present were: Dr. DeCristofaro, Mr. Mullaney, Ms. Colleen Roberts, Mrs. Edith Hughes, and Mrs. Tefta Burrelli, Clerk.

This meeting was called to review and discuss the Literacy program and the budget.

Early childhood through third grade is a critical time for beginning readers. From Kindergarten through third grade, children are taught the skills that together enable them to understand and find meaning in what they read and take advantage of the learning opportunities in fourth grade and beyond. These skills include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary and text comprehension.

Many students come to school with literacy backgrounds that put them at risk of failure. It is an imperative that we provide the underachieving students the interventions they need to close the achievement gap. It is the function of the literacy team to provide these interventions within a comprehensive design, to promote high quality literacy instruction with frequent progress monitoring to achieve positive expectations and standards for each of our students.

The Literacy program's mission was developed to identify students who struggle to acquire literacy through the administration and analysis of reading assessment. Literacy teachers provide intervention to struggling readers on grades Kindergarten through three. The Literacy program also provides system-wide professional development for training of our elementary staff.

The Literacy program consists of six literacy teachers, six Title 1 teachers and 2.5 on the ARRA grant. The following chart shows the number of students in the three tiers.

	Winter 2010 (3651)			Winter 2011 (3801)		
	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Kindergarten	439	163	99	440	144	131
Grade 1	387	161	151	446	96	145
Grade 2	383	102	110	487	83	119
Grade 3	423	115	122	388	82	113
Grade 4	421	113	64	439	87	141
Grade 5	<u>312</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>302</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>71</u>
Total	2365	697	589	2502	579	720
	65%	19%	16%	66%	15%	19%

Tier One	Needing only classroom instruction in an SBRR core program to continue grade level reading development.
Tier Two	At some risk for reading achievement and needs supplemental instruction to be successful in the core program.
Tier Three	At risk for reading achievement and needs intensive instruction in SBRR reading interventions designed to accelerate student achievement.

The district and school leadership regularly uses benchmarks and assessment tools, including MCAS, to measure student progress, and the effectiveness of instructional and support programs. The results are analyzed and disseminated in a timely manner. The literacy teachers work with ELL to help these teachers become teachers of reading.

Principals Renee Malvesti, Ruth Witmer and Maureen MacNeil explained how the literacy program functions in their school.

The students serviced by the Early Literacy Program are those students that are determined to be at various risk levels for reaching achievements. These students are identified as “at risk” by their performance scores on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The literacy team helps schools to implement a three tier model of reading prevention for all students K-3. Information from the assessments identifies students as:

Mrs. Hughes told the members that we have experienced much staff turnover in the past three to four years. The time that we are able to devote to training new staff and professional development is getting harder to schedule. The level of teacher expertise varies within the program. Mrs. Bragg asked why it was hard to find time. Mrs. Hughes answered that we lost our media people because of budget cuts. It is more of a contractual issue in prep time. Due to contractual issues, we cannot mandate they come on the planning time. We offer the program.

Last year we had a cut from full day to half day literacy. Mrs. Mahoney asked what is the impact? Mrs. Hughes answered that they are targeting grade one and then follow up in grade 2. They took a limited number of students. Last year it was 740, this year 500. The Literacy teachers are not in the building to converse with the teacher like they used to be.

Mr. McCarthy asked what will be the impact when the ARRA money is gone. Will the 2.5 have to go? Mrs. Hughes said she feels that the 2.5 is necessary to carry the program at the rate it is now. We are at bare bones.

On a motion by Mrs. Bragg, seconded by Mr. McCarthy, the Budget Subcommittee adjourned at 7:01 p.m. The ayes have it.