

Concord School District
Budget Work Session #4 – Student Services
February 15, 2020

Board members present: Jim Richards, Gina Cannon, Barb Higgins, Kate West, Jonathan Weinberg, Danielle Smith, Brenda Hastings, Pam Walsh, David Parker

Administrators present: *Superintendent Kathleen Murphy, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Director of Student Services Bob Belmont*

Board President Jim Richards called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Gina Cannon took roll call attendance. Business Administrator Jack Dunn began by summarizing expenditures for Student Services.

SUMMARY

Student Services (Function 1200|2100) includes funds for staff and resources for our general education program in our schools. We are proposing a budget of **\$23,579,467**, an increase of **\$1,003,097.89** or **4.44%**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Increase in tuition to other LEAs | \$70,500*
- Increase in out-of-district placements | \$275,552*

* - *This amount is offset with a \$500,000 transfer from the Special Education Trust Fund*

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES

[1200 2100] – SPECIAL ED AND PUPIL SERVICES	FY21 – BUDGET 10/28/20	FY22 – PROPOSED BUDGET	CHANGE (\$)	CHANGE (%)
[610000] - SALARIES	12,882,351.00	13,206,318.00	323,967.00	2.51
[620000] - BENEFITS	5,638,897.00	6,006,137.00	367,240.00	6.51
[630000] - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	1,378,742.53	1,337,251.00	(41,491.53)	(3.01)
[640000] - PURCHASED PROPERTY	6,001.00	12,934.22	6,933.22	115.53
[650000] - PURCHASED SERVICES	2,539,071.60	2,885,124.02	346,052.42	13.63
[660000] - SUPPLIES, BOOKS AND UTILITIES	112,809.98	109,647.76	(3,162.22)	(2.80)
[670000] - EQUIPMENT	16,906.00	21,065.00	4,159.00	24.60
[680000] - DUES, FEES & INTEREST	1,590.00	990.00	(600.00)	(37.74)
TOTALS	22,576,369.11	23,579,467.00	1,003,097.89	4.44

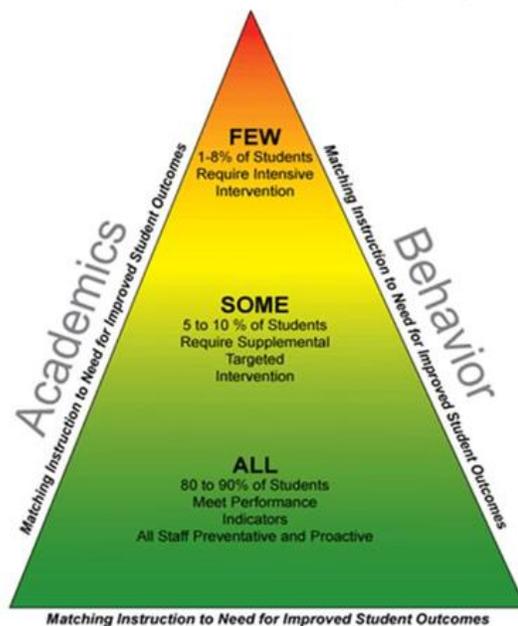
Barb Higgins clarified that students currently in OOD (out of district) placement remained in those placements due to the pandemic. Mr. Dunn explained that offsetting some of these costs was one of the reasons that funds from the Student Services Trust Fund were used.

Director of Student Services Bob Belmont explained the variety of services provided under the Student Services umbrella in the District:

- School Counselors, School Psychologists, Social Workers
- School Nurses
- Title I programming – reading and math interventions
- McKinney Vento Homeless Act – students “deemed homeless”
- English Language Learners programs – Title III
- Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Early childhood programming
- Special education programming

Mr. Belmont and Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley explained the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) used by the District, which involves continuous student progress monitoring to help match instruction to improved student outcomes.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)



MTSS in Concord Schools

- Universal Screening in preschool and kindergarten
- Data-Based Decision Making, Problem Solving
- Continuous Progress Monitoring
- Continuum of Evidence-Based Practices:
 - **Tier 1: Opportunities for all students**
 - **Tier 2: Targeted Supports**
 - **Tier 3: Specialized and intensive support**

Ms. Palley provided examples of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 practices. She explained that 21C is considered a Tier 1 program. A sampling of Tier 1 practices:

- Responsive Classroom practices
- Defined ‘Social-Emotional Learning’ (SEL) curricula
- Cluster/Teaming structures
- Advisory program
- “Zones of Regulation” program
- Mindfulness in classrooms
- Birth–5 Family Centers
- Family Voice/engagement
- After-School programs
- “Calming Corners”
- Therapy dog in school

- School counseling services
- GROW Team professional learning opportunities
- Family support/grandparent group

A sampling of Tier 2 programs:

- Various evidence-based small group interventions
 - CICO (Check-In/Check Out)
 - Social Skills groups
 - Academic Seminar (executive functioning skills)
 - Cognitive behavioral intervention for trauma groups (C-BITS)
 - Bereavement groups – Riverbend
 - Dialectical Behavior Therapy – Riverbend (mindfulness, emotional regulation)
 - “Coping Cat” (anxiety)
- Silent Mentors (1:1 relationship building)
- Student assistance program (substance misuse prevention/intervention)
- Student support/processing spaces
- Targeted counseling – individual and groups, based on needs
- Birth–age 8 home visiting, family outreach, community partner referral
- Play-based group for preschool English Learners (with Waypoint – Children’s Place)
- Riverbend collaborative case reviews

A sampling of Tier 3 programs:

- Specialized instruction through Individualized Plans (IEPs)
- Behavior support implemented (special education, behavioral support staff, related services) with various consultation and assessment supports
- Specialized intensive programs (elementary, middle, high)
- Diploma Academy program, personalized for students
- 1-to-1 Support from District or contracted staff
- “Wraparound services” (including family services/community supports)
 - RENEW (structured planning and individualized wraparound process)
- Ongoing progress monitoring based on interventions and student goals

Ms. Palley explained that student outcomes were made up of a variety of metrics, which comes from special education teams at each school. Mr. Richards asked if programming was planned to provide anticipated extra support for students in the upcoming school year given the unique challenges of the pandemic. Ms. Palley explained that there were, including the hiring of an additional in-home family visitor, additional Responsive Classroom training for teachers at all levels, and additional student advisory time at CHS. She explained that the only addition in the budget relevant to those support services was the additional SAP counselor, and that the District was anticipating significant pandemic-related grant money to provide additional student support services as determined by teams at each school. She explained the CHS student advisory program, which involves small groups of students meeting with an advisor as a support person, and the GROW project, which guides work on trauma response and has been in place in the District for four years.

Mr. Belmont reviewed Student Services positions in the budget, noting that these individuals worked in all MTSS levels:

- Special Education Teachers
- Project Search Teacher (Concord Hospital)
- ELL Teachers
- Speech and Language Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- School Psychologists
- Counselor/Therapists
- Social Workers
- Home Visitors
- Family Facilitators
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired
- Teacher of the Hearing Impaired/Assistive Technology Specialist
- Out-of-District Case Manager
- Reading Specialists
- Early Childhood Coordinator (birth–5)
- Family Center Coordinators
- School Counselors
- School Nurses
- Tutors
- ELL support staff
- Title 1 support staff
- High school interventionists
- Program Assistants
- Educational Assistants
- Director of Student Services
- Director of Special Education at CHS
- Special Education Coordinator at CHS
- Director of Special Education at RMS
- Elementary Assistant Principals for Student Services
- Preschool Special Education Coordinator

Ms. Palley explained the role of home visitors: individuals receive referrals from various sources, including family centers, schools, the hospital, and partner agencies. Home visitors meet with families and help provide support, including resources for food, housing, early childhood programs, etc. Superintendent Murphy added that research had shown these positions were highly effective for early intervention outcomes. Ms. Palley suggested asking clinical staff to attend a future non-budget meeting to discuss their roles, and the services and support they provide. Mr. Richards requested data on clinical staff (numbers per school, etc.) at an upcoming open budget session. Ms. Palley explained that the District had budgeted funds for translation and interpretation services for ELL families in the District. Pamela Walsh asked if homework and other school paperwork was translated for these families. Ms. Palley explained that ELL staff did work with these

students, but not everything was translated. She added that translators were often available at community meetings to help ensure ELL families can access information.

Mr. Belmont reviewed Title I school day programming in 2020-2021:

TITLE I SCHOOL DAY PROGRAMMING 2020 - 2021

Title I School:	# of Students Participating in Title I School Day Programming in Reading:	# of Students Participating in Title I School Day Programming in Mathematics:
Broken Ground School	78	80
Mill Brook School	140	0
Beaver Meadow School	93	29
Abbot Downing School	88	66
Christa McAuliffe School	71	0
Rundlett Middle School	33	0
Total:	503	175

Mr. Richards expressed concern about math proficiency and asked about the discrepancy in math vs. reading numbers at the elementary levels. Mr. Belmont explained that during the school day, Title I tutors at those schools were focused on reading rather than math. He added that he meets with the Principals to talk about where energies are being focused, and interest had been expressed in growing the math supports in those schools.

Ms. Walsh asked which decisions were left to Principals and which were District policies or decisions. Mr. Belmont explained that available grant funds determined some of this, and building-level decisions were generally left to Principals, but that they were presented with relevant District data. Ms. Palley added that schools received funds based on the rank order of the percentage of students eligible for Title I funding, eligibility for which is determined by percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced meals. Superintendent Murphy used Mill Brook (MBS) and Broken Ground (BGS) schools as examples of how Title I funding was allocated: there was a significant gap in student reading performance between second and third grade when moving up from MBS to BGS, so BGS' Principal focused their Title I funding on reading supports based on that data. Ms. Walsh asked for a breakdown of how Title I funds were spent per school and how the District assessed which students received services. Jonathan Weinberg asked if BGS student outcomes improved after reading support increased. Superintendent Murphy explained that student reading outcomes had improved significantly. David Parker asked who provided direct Title I services to students. Mr. Belmont explained that those services were provided by District reading specialists and tutors. He added that Title I tutors were required to have an Associate or teaching degree. Gina Cannon noted that a degree of proficiency in spoken and written English was important to help teach math and build

mathematical literacy. Mr. Richards suggested that additional questions or review topics in this category should be brought to the Instructional Committee.

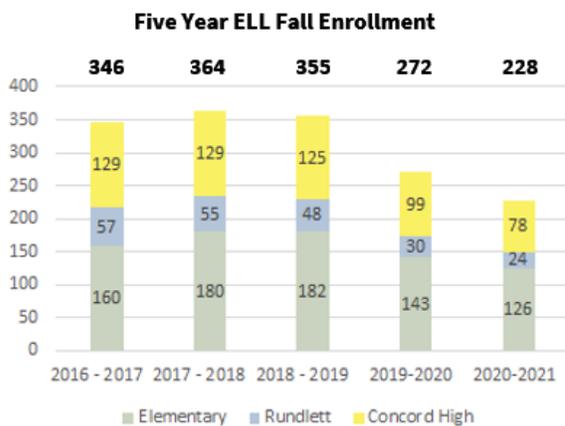
Mr. Belmont reviewed Title I summer programming and student participation per school.

TITLE I SUMMER PROGRAMMING 2020

Title I School:	# of Students Participating in Title I School Summer Programming in Reading:	# of Students Participating in Title I School Summer Programming in Math:
Broken Ground School	57	19
Mill Brook School	35	0
Beaver Meadow School	34	34
Abbot Downing School	28	0
Christa McAuliffe School	15	15
Rundlett Middle School	70	0
Total:	239	68

Mr. Belmont reviewed ELL enrollment and program highlights, noting that ELL students comprised 7% of the student body, and that 37 languages were spoken in the District, with Nepali, Kinyarwanda, and Swahili the most common. He noted that the decreased enrollment numbers were due in part to lower numbers of refugees being resettled in Concord, and in part due to a change in the ACCESS test eligibility threshold.

ENROLLMENT - ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



Summary

We have 228 students receiving support as English Language Learners in our school district. The three primary languages spoken by our students in EL programming are Nepali, Kinyarwanda and Swahili. There are thirty-seven other languages spoken by our EL students. Our EL students represent 7% of our students enrolled.

Highlights

- ✓ We have encouraged our students in EL programming to participate in “rich oral language experiences” including reading, writing, speaking and listening experiences in after school 21st Century Programs, Title I Extended Day Programming and Summer Programming
- ✓ Our students annually participate in NHD OE mandated ACCESS 2.0 Testing with results driving and informing EL instruction
- ✓ Our school have created active parent engagement activities for parents of EL students
- ✓ Our Concord High School EL Programming has been regionally recognized for its exemplary transition to post-secondary education opportunities.

Mr. Belmont reviewed section 504 student numbers.

STUDENTS ON SECTION 504 PLANS

Number of Students on Section 504 Plans

School of Enrollment	Students on Section 504 Plans
Abbot-Downing	8
Beaver Meadow	3
Broken Ground	9
Christa McAuliffe	15
Mill Brook	0
Rundlett Middle	56
Concord High	45
Total	136

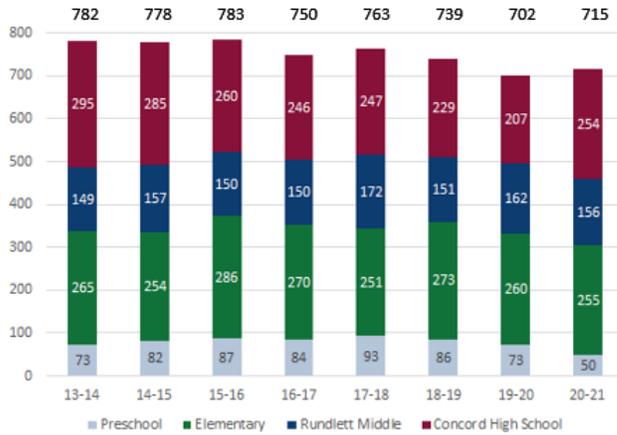
Section 504 of the 1973 **Rehabilitation Act** was the first disability civil rights law to be enacted in the United States. It prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in programs that receive federal financial assistance. Section 504 Plans, for student with a disability that has a significant impact on a major life activity e.g., learning, provides reasonable accommodations in the public school setting.

Examples of reasonable accommodations in 504 plans include:

- preferential seating.
- extended time on tests and assignments.
- reduced homework or classwork.
- verbal, visual, or technology aids.
- modified textbooks or audio-video materials.
- behavior management support.
- adjusted class schedules or grading.
- verbal testing.

Mr. Belmont reviewed District special education enrollment numbers.

ENROLLMENT – SPECIAL EDUCATION



Summary

We are proud of the highly inclusive programs and of our students' individual progress and development.

Highlights

- 715 students, ages 3 – 21 in district
- 33 students placed out of district
- 25 students attend charter schools
- 29 students attend Second Start (7 SpEd/22 Reg Ed)

Students with IEPs

- Preschool: 50
- Elementary: 255
- Middle School: 156
- High School: 254
- Total: 715

Mr. Belmont reviewed the frequency of identified educational disabilities in District schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

FREQUENCY OF IDENTIFIED EDUCATIONAL DISABILITIES IN OUR SCHOOLS 2020-2021

DISABILITY	PRESCHOOL			ELEMENTARY				MIDDLE	HIGH	Total #	Out of District and Charter School	
	BMS	MBS	*CP	ADS	BGS	BMS	CMS	MBS	RMS			CHS
<i>*CP community placement</i>												
Autism	6	5	0	5	6	9	14	8	21	47	131	6 OOD + 4 Charter
Deaf-Blindness	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Deafness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Developmental Delay	17	16	0	15	3	19	17	30	0	0	124	5 OOD + 2 Charter
Emotional Disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	21	22	61	12 OOD + 1 Charter
Hearing Impairment	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	10	2 Charter
Intellectual Disabilities	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	9	18	2 OOD
Multiple Disabilities	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	4	9	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Other Health Impaired	3	3	0	12	12	9	4	8	54	92	220	11 OOD + 12 Charter
Specific Learning Disability	0	0	0	8	27	18	7	4	68	73	221	8 OOD + 8 Charter
Speech-Language Impairment	12	6	0	7	13	9	8	8	19	30	122	5 OOD + 5 Charter
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	1 OOD + 1 Charter
Visual Impairment – Blindness	0	2	0	2	2	2	2	0	5	3	20	1 OOD + 1 Charter

Mr. Belmont explained that many of the students placed out of District were court-ordered placements and that the 3R program was still in place and housed at Beaver Meadow School (BMS). Mr. Richards asked how those trends and numbers had changed over time and if staffing and programming had also changed to reflect changing needs. Mr. Belmont noted that autism numbers had increased over time and that the District had ensured that programming and supports were in place to help these students. Mr. Belmont and Ms. Palley explained that most of the costs associated with providing special education services to students enrolled in charter schools would likely not exist if these students were enrolled in district, as they would be receiving existing District services.

Mr. Belmont reviewed the placement continuum for students on IEPs:

- Regular classroom
- Resource room
- Substantially separate
- Educational day
- Residential
- Home-based program
- Individual non-school environment

He reviewed a history of out-of-district placements since 2014, which were determined by the District, through court orders, or placement into foster care by DCYF. Superintendent Murphy noted that Concord’s out-of-district numbers were proportionately low for a district of this size.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT PLACEMENTS

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
DISTRICT	22	17	20	22	17	13	11	14	16
COURT	3	1	3	9	8	8	11	14	9
FOSTER CARE	2	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	8
TOTAL	27	21	23	32	26	22	22	28	33

- Anticipated placements for 2021-2022 include (8) elementary (1 court ordered); (8) middle (1 court ordered); (16) high school (9 court ordered)
- The costs of private school out-of-district placements range from \$63,827.45 to \$382,490.40. (including transportation)
- The number of students in out-of-district placements has increased slightly due to increase in foster placements.
- Expenses are offset by anticipated revenue from the State, based on reimbursement formulas that shift annually and by our Special Education Trust Fund (balance)

Mr. Belmont reviewed out-of-district costs per school.

COSTS OF OUT-OF-DISTRICT PLACEMENTS

School	Tuition for School Year and Summer	Transportation	Total Cost Based on 2020-2021 Rates
Contoocook School	\$59,453.30	\$39,000.00	\$98,453.30
RSEC Longview School	\$58,024.95	\$67,860.00	\$125,884.95
Spaulding Youth Center, Day	\$105,652.48	\$55,000.00	\$160,652.48
Parker Academy	\$63,827.45	Using CSD Transport	\$63,827.45
Easter Seals Residential	\$382,490.40	NA	\$382,490.40
Crotched Mountain School	\$98,969.20	\$17,052.20	\$116,021.40
St. Ann's Residential, Methuen, MA	\$194,755.40	NA	\$194,755.40
Whitney Academy, East Freetown, MA	\$153,785.45	NA	\$153,785.45

He then reviewed costs for contracted services, including supports for autism, physical therapy, IEP services and consultations, psychological services, and vision services. He explained that some of these costs were reimbursed through Medicare/Medicaid.

- Autism and behavior consultative services: \$820,819
- Physical therapy services: \$184,810
- Individual student IEP services, consultation and evaluations: \$50,000
- Psychological and counseling services – evaluations: \$40,000
- Vision services: \$28,670

Mr. Belmont reviewed out-of-district placement revenue and how state aid worked for these placements.

Reimbursement for court placements

- District pays up to 3 times the state average per pupil cost (**≈\$50,758.26**); State pays remainder. Currently 9 students in court-ordered placements.

State special education aid for District-placed students

- District pays up to set per pupil cap (**≈ \$59,217.97** or 3.5 x state average per pupil cost)
- State reimburses percentage of remainder (a % of cost between 3.5 and 10 x average; 100% over 10x)
- ≈ 96% for 2020 – 2021, 94% for 2019 – 2020 and 70% for 2018 -2019

Mr. Belmont reviewed an upcoming RFP for special education programming evaluation, which would review the following: program offerings/continuum of services; special education regulations (performance indicators, monitoring, and compliance); professional development for staff; consistency in procedure, process and programming; articulation among schools; resources; and parent relations. He noted that an RFP could be issued within a month or two and that obtaining an overall picture of the special education program had been a Board goal for several years. Superintendent Murphy noted that a draft internal RFP currently existed.

Mr. Belmont explained his goal of creating a special education parent advisory council (Concord SEPAC), and that he hoped to kick off the project within the next week or two.

- SEPAC – organization run by parents in conjunction with the District
- SEPAC leadership team
- Training, resources, and website for parents
- Annual SEPAC events: parents’ rights for special education training
- Community inclusion awards

Mr. Dunn reviewed upcoming meeting dates, Board member contact information, and public hearing dates, all of which could be found on the District website: www.sau8.org.

Mr. Weinberg made a motion to adjourn.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Weinberg, seconded by Ms. Smith).

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Cannon, *Secretary*
 Lauren Hynds, *Recorder*