

**School Board Budget Work Session Minutes  
January 25, 2017**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Leah Paladino, Chair; Harry Daniel, Vice-Chair; Jason Collier, Member; Sharon Mack, Member; Rodney Kibler, Member; Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent

**MEMBERS PRESENT BY TELEPHONE:** N/A

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** N/A

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:** N/A

Dr. Whitmarsh invited Mr. Huber, Assistant Superintendent and Ms. Spencer, Business & Facilities Director, to the work session to provide additional information if necessary.

Dr. Whitmarsh started the work session by stating the presentation provided to the school board members was the same as what was presented at the January 11, 2017 school board meeting. Dr. Whitmarsh stated no new information had been received as far as revenue, health insurance and VRS.

Dr. Whitmarsh emphasized the goal of the work session is to discuss priorities for the school board and to start the process of putting together a FY2018 budget proposal to share at the February 8, 2017 school board meeting.

Dr. Whitmarsh state since the January 11, 2017 school board meeting central office administration have been working on requests and prioritizing them.

Dr. Whitmarsh stated the enrollment is flat overall. Dr. Whitmarsh stated during the work session VRS and health insurance needs to be addressed. Dr. Whitmarsh stated information on debt retirement was included in the information packets. Dr. Whitmarsh stated the debt retirement will remain so it can be re-purposed for facilities upgrades.

Dr. Whitmarsh stated the discussion of the work session is to address VRS and talk more about health insurance, salary increases and any needs. Dr. Whitmarsh emphasized that the school board keep in mind the priorities they set for the 2016-2017 school year as discussion of VRS, health insurance and salary increases take place.

The work session discussion began with salary increases. Mrs. Paladino discussed the PREP meeting that took place on January 25, 2017. Mrs. Paladino stated the nine school divisions that were in attendance at the PREP meeting stated their salary increase was on average 2.2% based on their preliminary budget work.

Dr. Whitmarsh and the school board discussed a salary increase. Dr. Whitmarsh stated surrounding divisions have the ability to give a raise. Dr. Whitmarsh stated as a division we do not want to lose ground with the competitiveness of salaries. Dr. Whitmarsh stated if one of the main priorities is to retain highly qualified staff there needs to be initial discussion of salary.

Dr. Kibler stated a 2% salary increase would be good to budget for.

Mrs. Mack suggested having the numbers showing the budget amount that reflects a one-time bonus versus a salary increase.

Mrs. Paladino echoed Dr. Kibler's suggestion of starting with a 2% salary increase in the budget.

Dr. Whitmarsh started the next discussion concerning health insurance. Dr. Whitmarsh stated most school divisions are expecting an increase in health insurance even though numbers are not finalized. Dr. Whitmarsh stated the projected increase for health insurance is 15%; however, the hope is the increase will only be 10%.

Dr. Whitmarsh stated a decision needs to be made whether to continue to hold employees harmless of the health insurance, which means not passing along the increases to the employees or pass along some of the increase costs to employees.

After discussion the school board made the decision to absorb the cost increase of insurance if at all possible.

Dr. Whitmarsh started the next discussion of the requests for consideration in terms of personnel and non-personnel.

Dr. Whitmarsh stated the list of requests was closely examined. Dr. Whitmarsh stated the requests were prioritized by the following criteria:

- mandates or based on enrollment numbers.
- items would assist in moving forward as a school division
- items that would improve the quality of support to staff

Dr. Whitmarsh reviewed the worksheet of requests with the school board. Dr. Whitmarsh discussed the personnel that are needed due to mandates or enrollment required, which include the following:

- Teachers
  - Special Education
  - Exploratory
- Behavioral/Autism Specialist

Dr. Whitmarsh reviewed the list of requested positions that are not driven by mandates or enrollment, which include the following:

- Teachers
  - ELL Teacher/Liaison
  - Special Education
  - Science/Civics
  - Online Learning
- School Counselor
- New Teacher/Mentoring
- Non-instructional Support
- Facilities Coordinator

Dr. Whitmarsh and the school board discussed the non-personnel requests, which included:

- Expansion of the Chromebook initiatives
- Industry credentialing

Dr. Kibler questioned which of the requests to hold on to that were presented. Dr. Whitmarsh responded to hold on to all the requests presented in the packets.

Dr. Kibler commented that the requests made result in a “bare bones” budget.

Mrs. Paladino commented that the school board needs to move forward with requesting the considerations that Dr. Whitmarsh presented. Mrs. Paladino commented that the school board has committed to moving the division and community forward.

Dr. Whitmarsh commented that there is tremendous value to the personnel and non-personnel requests for the schools.

Mrs. Mack commented that the full needs-based budget should be presented. Mrs. Mack commented that this is how the school board should start the budget process then make the tough choices if necessary.

Mrs. Paladino requested from remaining school board members who was in agreeance of the notion that the personnel and non-personnel requests were all reasonable and helps the school division to move forward. The remaining school board members agreed the requests were reasonable.

Mrs. Paladino commended Dr. Whitmarsh and her staff for the work on the budget process so far.

Dr. Whitmarsh thanked the school board members for their support and their discussion.

Mrs. Paladino adjourned the meeting.

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Chair

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Clerk