

Curley Budget Meeting at Court St. - 1/26/12

John McDonough (CFO)
Dominic Amara (Asst. Superintendent for Middle Ed)
Eileen De Los Reyes (Asst. Superintendent for ELL)
John Vere (Asst. Superintendent for SPED)
Jerry Burrell (Enrollment)
Evelyn Adario (Enrollment assistant)
Seth (CFO assistant)
Jeff Slater (Curley Principal)
David Diaz (Curley Asst. Principal)
Lindsey Weeramuni (Curley SSC)
Carrie Fletcher (Curley SPC)

Curley K-8 Merger. Schools were initially kept separate for budget purposes. This was inequitable because it was unlike any other K-8 in the city. Situation persisted until all schools were revisited with revised allocations for SY 2011 (weighted student funding). We do not know why this was set up this way at the Curley; it did not happen at other merged schools.

Weighted Student Funding. Goal of this system is equality and transparency. Every parent should have assurances that like students receive like funding - regardless of their school. This has caused strain where there were historical patterns of funding that were not consistent - the Curley is an example of this.

Soft landing money was meant to ease the transitions and allow time for planning of a new budget systems for the affected schools to figure out how to do more with less. It was only intended to last for one year. Last year's soft landing money was around \$425K - the Curley does not get that money this year. The Curley is not especially uniquely positioned with respect to this problem: there are other schools equally or more negatively impacted by the loss of soft landing money.

Curley Success. The Curley has consistently increased its enrollment and is now the largest K-8 school in the district. The enrollment increase for SY 2012-13 is projected at 3%. The budget (*absent soft landing money*) has a corresponding increase (about \$280K). However, when you factor in the loss of the soft landing funds, we are about negative \$187K: that is the problem. There are a total of 24 schools with a budget similar or higher budget decrease, even factoring in soft landing loss. This group includes seven K-8 schools.

BPS Expenses re: Charter Schools. Charter schools are paid on a tuition basis by the state's distribution of money to the city (local aid dollars). Charters receive about \$14K per kid from the city - regardless of what is happening in BPS as a whole. Where the total amount of local aid does not go up, charters still get their full amount per child, and BPS is left with a smaller amount to service the non-charter students. This is an issue at the state level, not the city level; the city and BPS have no ability to influence

this or try to equalize the funding between charter kids and BPS kids. The ultimate impact of charter funding is to reduce the amount of local aid that is left for BPS. Charters will always get their 100% per child off the top; BPS has what remains.

On buses: BPS is legally required to bus kids to charter schools, which typically pull from all corners of the city, resulting in longer bus rides and significant trickle-down impacts on zone/neighborhood bus routes (e.g., if a bus on a long route gets behind, there is domino-type effect on other routes that need that bus). Although the district does bus parochial kids, BPS officials say it is unclear as to whether that is legally required.

Role of School Committee sets the policy for the district. As to the budget: Superintendent recommends a detailed allocation of the funds available to BPS, and the School Committee acts on her proposal, ultimately recommending a BPS budget to be included in the city budget. School Committee has a very meaningful role - it is not a rubber stamp. The budget will be presented on February 1 and there will be series of community meetings about it.

Take-Aways/Advice. BPS people will look at enrollment and see if they and we can identify other stress points that could positively impact our funding under the weighted-student allocation formula. BPS has indicated that they would like an open dialogue with us. BPS reps do not appear to be moved by a values-based argument - this is all numbers and formulas.

Query whether we will be effective if we continue to lobby the School Committee or its members. It seems that we have a good access point and a willingness on the part of BPS to stay in discussions with them. Continued pressure on the School Committee could actually backfire and/or work against the notion that we are willing to collaborate with them on the specific substance of our budget and our needs.

There was also a request that parents be patient and understand that the budget moves in cycles, and that we are in tough times right now; everyone is feeling the impact. Can we maintain an attitude as a parent community that this is a dire - but ultimately temporary - situation? When funding increases in the future, things will be more the way we want them.