

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PLAINVILLE, CONNECTICUT
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023**

Special Meeting Topics: ► **Overview of Budget Goals and Priorities for FY2023-24**
► **Review Line Item Budget Details**
► **Other**

Place and Time: Plainville High School Learning Commons at 7:00 PM

Members Present: Rachel Buchanan, Cassandra Clark, Chair Lori Consalvo, Rebecca Martinez, Crystal St. Lawrence, Becky Tyrrell, and Foster White

Members Absent: Vice Chair Deborah Hardy and Laurie Peterson

Also Present: Steven K. LePage, Superintendent of Schools
David Levenduski, Asst, Superintendent of Schools
Sam Adlerstein, Director of Business and Operations
District Administrators

Early Departures: None

Board Chair Lori Consalvo called the special meeting of the Plainville Board of Education to order at 7:06 PM.

Superintendent LePage presented a PowerPoint of the proposed 2023-24 Budget for Plainville Community Schools. He began by highlighted the goals and actions of the District's vision document and discussed the areas of focus. He then discussed the Strategic Planning PCS District 3-Year Priorities for 2022-23, Equity, SEL, Mastery, Community Connections and Systems and Operations and the district's priority goals. Also aligned with the district's goals are Portrait of the Graduate, i.e., (Mindfulness, Resiliency, Communicative, Innovative and Collaborative), SRBI/MTSS and Enrichment and College and Career Pathways. He commented that a lot of work has been done throughout the District in these areas.

Mr. LePage stated that he is happy with a number of ESSER funded branding and building improvements that have taken place a PHS, such as the refurbishing of the Learning Commons, outside flags which run across Robert Holcomb Way (which also align with Portrait of the Graduate) new signage to better direct traffic around the building, as well as branding tools throughout the building, much needed pool upgrades and the new playground at Linden Street School.

He spoke about College and Career Pathways being developed throughout Plainville High School. He then discussed the fieldwork experience (training on the job) and the many companies that participate in the program. He stated that many of the businesses and organizations that attended the district's PHS career focused Learning Adventure Days in December, have expressed an interest in serving as a host site for student job shadows and internships. He also focused on the Learning Adventure Days program which was piloted last year and later expanded. This program gave students many different offerings from which to choose. He then touched on the integration of Portrait of the Graduate skills in curriculum and classrooms. He stated that district improved future interventions to support the whole student at PHS (Academic and Social Emotional). He then reported on the outcomes and destinations of students from the Class of 2022 and the various paths and opportunities afforded the students. He also discussed the meaningful learning opportunities for students, SEL through school-wide spirit days, Classroom Charters, Makerspace, and classroom activities which support the Portrait of the Graduate by teaching skills of being collaborative, communicative and innovative, the Day of Play Cardboard Challenge and various other activities, including Veteran's Day, which are meaningful learning opportunities. He stated that the district has tried to find opportunities to support the community while also bringing families together for special events.

Mr. LePage stated that Plainville is an increasingly diverse community with 32 different languages spoken within the community. He also presented an historical perspective of the district's challenging educational landscape.

Mr. LePage then discussed the impact COVID has had on student learning. In October, enrollment was 2,299 students which was 527 more students compared to this time last year. The district has largely returned to its Pre-COVID level. Even with continuing challenges, the district also is addressing learning gaps, social and emotional needs, and other likely deficits in a systemic and meaningful way.

He then discussed ESSER and ARPA grant funding and how it impacts the schools. He stated that the district was awarded \$6.7M in ESSER funding, of which \$2.8M remain. In addition, the town received approximately \$5.0M ARPA funding. The district is down to its last ESSER grant, ARP expiring September 30, 2024. Approximately half of the remaining funds are planned for staffing with the balance to capital (including MSP) and a variety of projects.

He discussed Per Pupil Cost, Plainville's cost per student of \$19,324 ranks #104 in cost (highest to lowest) of 166, (lower than 63% of all districts). The comparison this year is impacted by COVID, both in terms of enrollment and expenditures (including COVID grant funded).

Contractual Increases: The usual contractual increases alone would amount to more than 4.6% of the budget compared to the typical long-term increase of less than 2.0%. Town leaders and the Superintendent have been advised to use a 12% increase for Health Insurance. The district also used an overall inflation factor of 4.0% for non-salary related items.

Three Year Teachers' Contract Settlement:

Of the thirty teacher contracts negotiated at the time of Plainville's settlement, the majority were equal to or higher than Plainville. Many of those lower were just so. All but a few were higher than 11.00%. The teacher's union coordinates their negotiations at a state level and most are settled within a narrow range. The few outside of that range are generally due to non-financial items. Plainville's settlement was 11.50% over three years.

He then discussed the Board of Education Budget History:

- ▶ The FY2016-17 and FY2017-18 budgets were reduced mid-year by \$100,000 and \$300,000, respectively, in reaction to the State ECS Grant reduction.
- ▶ A third of the 2017-18 budget increase was due to a 6% increase in health insurance costs.
- ▶ The 2018-19 adjustment is for health insurance, requiring a change in health insurance providers to the State Plan, from the prior self-insurance plan.
- ▶ In 2019-20 and 2021-22, a combined \$2,003,572 BOE budget balance was returned to the town because of COVID-related realized savings over the past two fiscal years.
- ▶ This cost savings stemmed from a very undesirable circumstance that disrupted the district's teaching and learning.
- ▶ The district continues to recover from those challenging years, still relying on ESSER grant funds.
- ▶ The 2023-24 budget is the last year the district will rely on ESSER funding. Transitioning away from that grant will be an additional challenge.

Mr. LePage then reported on the BOE Budget Status as of December 31, 2022:

- ▶ Salary and Benefits comprise 85% of the District budget.
- ▶ BOE spending to date approximates a typical year and the district is running the usual array of programs plus additional COVID relief support.
- ▶ The local school budget is 27% funded by the State, through the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant.
- ▶ The amount of funding is based upon a formula using several factors including student count and level of need.

Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grant Status:

- ▶ FY2019, State legislation phased-in a grant formula over 10 years. Some towns like Plainville benefit, while others are phased out. Plainville receives increased ECS of approximately \$200,000 annually.
- ▶ These revenues are paid to the town, and benefit all residents.
- ▶ In 2021-22 the district changed to tuition-free preschool. Tuition-free preschool students will be added to the ECS reimbursement amount, increasing the grant well in excess of tuition previously received and allowing the district to use those funds to expand the program without additional local cost.

Pre-schools Impact on Early Literacy:

On Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) phonetic awareness tasks, students who attend PCS PreK scored notably higher than those who did not. This statistically significant performance is a focus of PreK and a later indicator of future reading success. Additionally, when comparing the *At, Within and Below* performance percentage of the PCS

PreK students and non-PCS PreK students, PCS PreK/K helped to bring Plainville's model closer to the SRBI triangle the district seeks.

Mr. LePage and the Board then reviewed the line-item budget pages.

In conclusion, Mr. LePage stated that the administration will continue to be thoughtful and mindful in their budget approach. They will request only what they believe essential to educate and support their students' needs, and will continue to collaborate, communicate, innovate and remain mindful and resilient in their budgeting practices and in all things and will do their very best for the children, families and staff. With that said, Mr. LePage proposed a budget of \$43,397,388 (after Health insurance change) which is a 5.06% increase after Health insurance change or \$2,088,591 increase (after Health insurance change) for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Mr. LePage also stated that the Board has an upcoming budget meeting scheduled for January 19th and suggests that they review the materials over the next couple of days and reconvene on the 19th to review line item budget details and to discuss goals and priorities. All questions and concerns may be forwarded to him prior to the meeting.

No action was taken at this meeting.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CRYSTAL ST. LAWRENCE TO ADJOURN THE SPECIAL MEETING AT 9:05 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY REBECCA MARTINEZ. THE MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Joan Calistro
Recorder of Minutes