

School Committee Questions

School Committee – FY19 Budget Questions

1. I see that we offer course reductions + stipends for Department Chairs and that the cost of those positions for FY19 is budgeted at \$337,792 (Figure 22 in the budget book). Are these contractual positions? Please discuss the responsibilities in those positions and their role in the learning and teaching process.

Yes, the Department Chairs are contractual positions at the high school and are important to the overall education program of the school. Department Chairs are members of the high school leadership team. They provide instructional leadership for their specific department regarding the attainment of curriculum goals, alignment with standards, implementation of common assessments, and the use of effective instructional strategies that will most appropriately meet the needs of students. In addition, they coordinate the department's curriculum resources and equipment, review requests for orders of materials, and work with the administration to develop schedules for teachers and students that will provide for efficient operation of the school and a high level of learning for students.

2. I see on Figure 22 that our Regular Day Professional Development budget for FY 19 is budgeted at \$209,180 and our Special Education-dedicated Professional Development for FY is budgeted at \$15,000. On Table A6 our ranking for spending in this category amongst DESE-selected comparable districts in FY16 is 1st and the figures fluctuate dramatically from district to district. Could you please elaborate on the reasons for the dramatic fluctuations and provide a general overview of our district's Professional Development approach, focus areas, and needs for FY 19?

For professional development, we are focusing most staff trainings on items aligned closely with our district goals—for instance, closing the achievement gap, mathematics instruction, literacy instruction and strategies, social-emotional learning and tiered supports in order to minimize obstacles to student achievement. As a teacher mentioned at the recent School Committee meeting, staff feedback regarding these trainings has been very positive, and our administrative team has done an outstanding job at coordinating these trainings in a way to truly make a difference in student outcomes.

Regarding professional development, it is perhaps also important to note that by Massachusetts general law and DESE guidelines, school districts are required annually to implement professional development for all administrators, teachers, and other professional staff employed by the district. Districts are also required to “set forth a budget for professional development within the confines of the foundation budget,” and districts have an obligation by law to provide no-cost options for educators to renew a Professional License.

Beyond meeting legal and contractual requirements, of course, professional development is also an important means by which districts attract and retain the most qualified staff—and continually support educators in order to maximize achievement for all students. The Table A6 is based on DESE designations (which seem to have caused some confusion). Due to the

understandable confusion in this area, it may be helpful to clarify individually each item that the DESE includes in its “professional development” designation.

Staff Professional Development

The “Staff Professional Development” line (the largest dollar amount in the table) represents staff salaries for days that students are not in session: the two staff preparation days before students begin school in the fall, the elementary/high school conference day, and the two in-service days for staff (one in the fall and one in the spring). Professional development obviously does not occur during every one of these days—for example during parent conferences. This is simply how the DESE defines this specific line. As you may know, students are required by state law to attend school 180 days each year, and the collective bargaining agreement with the Reading teachers defines the regular work year as 185 days. In other words, the dollar amounts indicated in this line are already incorporated into the salary cost-center of the district budget (the figures represent a portion of the teachers’ salaries as obligated by contract), and so do not represent any additional funding being allocated to professional development.

Tuition Reimbursement

The “Tuition Reimbursement” line is also a contractual obligation, and indicates the amount budgeted to reimburse staff for expenses associated with tuition and obligatory fees for courses to improve the professional competence of teachers. This amount includes the annual funding cap for tuition reimbursement as defined in the collective bargaining agreement with the Reading teachers. As you may know, Massachusetts requires that educators possess a Master’s degree to obtain a professional license.

Districtwide Professional Development

The “Districtwide Professional Development” line is actually discretionary, as it represents the funding that may be allocated for professional development or trainings aligned with curriculum work and district goals—for instance, workshops for educator licensure renewal, registration for professional conferences, consultants for staff trainings, etc.

Substitute Coverage

The “Substitute Coverage” line reflects the funding used to contract with substitute teachers when a classroom teacher may need coverage during the school year in order to work with individual students (for instance, to administer some benchmark assessments at the elementary level), participate in a training, attend professional development, observe another classroom, etc. Research evidence has indicated that job-embedded professional development, which engages educators in sustained learning over multiple days and months, is consistently most effective to increase student achievement. Over the last couple of years, especially as we have had to align to the state’s new standards in ELA, Math, and Science—and of course also address the Level 3 accountability rating, the district has been moving to what we believe is a more effective, targeted approach of professional development in order to support teachers and provide a more proven, cost-effective model to impact student outcomes.

Stipends

The “Stipends” line reflects the district funding allocated to provide stipends to staff as defined in the teachers’ collective bargaining agreement. In lieu of administrative positions that many other districts employ, such as curriculum directors or content-area coordinators, Reading offers modest stipends to create a leadership structure among our existing staff. These relatively small

stipends are being distributed to nearly 100 staff members across all levels in the district, whose teacher leadership is providing an essential role in supporting our staff and students.

As published recently in a review of research on the most effective ways of providing teacher development and improving student learning, “cultivating leadership in staff” is a key component. (“Teacher Development Research Review: Keys to Educator Success,” Edutopia, January 3, 2013 / Updated November 1, 2015). According to research, teacher leadership is critical. As stated in the review, “Accomplished teachers are most knowledgeable about how students in their school or district learn, and thus are ideal candidates to lead professional-learning and curriculum development efforts.” The figure includes stipends to serve in such roles as curriculum leaders, assistant principals at the elementary schools, and teacher mentors. (Massachusetts law requires districts to provide an induction program for all educators in their first year and also requires teachers to complete at least 50 hours of mentoring beyond the induction year for professional licensure.) Of course, in addition to complying with state regulations or leveraging its proven effectiveness at impacting both professional development and student achievement, providing opportunities for teacher leadership within a district is also important in order to retain outstanding educators as they progress in their careers.

When DESE designations are being used to compare different communities, it is perhaps important as well to note how funding in other categories can relate to professional development—especially in other districts. For instance, if other districts employ positions such as coordinators, directors, and coaches to oversee and support curriculum and instruction (all of which are very common and a major way of delivering professional development to staff in these districts), these positions would be included within the professional salaries in other designations—and not included in the “professional development” category. For instance, the “Instructional Leadership” designation by the DESE reflects funding allocated for school administrators (such as principals and assistant principals) as well as other district administrators (such as coordinators and directors). In this category, Reading ranks below many comparable communities, even some with fewer schools and thus a smaller number of principals being included in the funding. In order to get a complete perspective on how professional development is being delivered in a specific community, the number of salaried instructional leaders within a district would also need to be part of the comparison—especially as this is a best practice in education and an increasingly common structure being utilized in our state.

Miscellaneous

The “Miscellaneous” line primarily represents expenses and materials associated with mentor training and induction support for new staff, as described above.

- Figure 33 provides a detailed breakdown of the student participation in athletics. Can we get a similar chart for extra-curricular activity participation in grades 7-12? If that information is not readily accessible, perhaps approximate figures could be compiled for FY17 and we could begin to capture that data more precisely for FY 18 and forward?

The chart below provides the extra-curricular activity participation figures for the High School.

High School Drama, Band, and Participation Program

SCHOOL YEAR	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
**FALL DRAMA CAST/HEAD TECH	89	100	78
FALL DRAMA CREW	47	41	48
WINTER DRAMA CAST/HEAD TECH	58	83	47
WINTER DRAMA CREW	55	45	59
SPRING DRAMA CAST/HEAD TECH	81	46	*
SPRING DRAMA CREW	46	48	*
MARCHING BAND	35	42	38
JAZZ BAND	18	17	19
STAGE BAND	14	11	17
FALL GUARD	15	19	12
WINTER GUARD	12	17	13
TOTAL	470	469	

****2016-17 and 2017-18 includes Non Drama Improv Students**

*** Data not yet available**

2017-18 Fall Drama Cast/Head Tech Pippin had less Cast & Head Tech positions available than 2016-17 Fall Drama Cast/Head Tech The Wedding Singer. Also 2017-18 had less Non Drama Improv students than 2016-17

- If additional revenue becomes available, would it make sense for the Town overall to conduct a census study to predict future demographic trends so that it can more precisely plan for anticipated space and services needs across sectors of the population? I would find that data extremely helpful as we plan ahead.

The cost of an enrollment study is approximately \$5,200. We have not included the cost of an enrollment survey within the FY'18 or FY'19 budgets. The Reading Public Schools has not conducted an enrollment study in over 10 years. Although overall enrollment has not changed dramatically, at some point a study may be useful for future space needs.

Financial Overview Budget Questions (Figures 7-8)

5. Please provide the following information with respect to current and recent School Committee budgets.

	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
% increase for level service budget over previous year's SC budget	5.1% <i>per FY18 question document</i>	4.8% <i>per FY18 question document</i>	4.8% <i>per FY18 question document</i>	4.9% <i>per FY18 question document</i>	5.2% <i>Refer to Figure 1 in FY19 budget book</i>
% increase of SC budget over previous year's SC budget	4.18% <i>Refer to Figure 13 in FY19 Budget book – these figures represent actual budget approved by Town Meeting</i>	2.75% <i>Refer to Figure 13 in FY19 Budget book– these figures represent actual budget approved by Town Meeting</i>	3.5% <i>Refer to Figure 13 in FY19 Budget book– these figures represent actual budget approved by Town Meeting</i>	1.4% <i>Refer to Figure 13 in FY19 Budget book– these figures represent actual budget approved by Town Meeting</i>	3.2% <i>Refer to Figure 1 in FY19 budget book</i>
Amount (\$'s) SC budget was over (or under) FinCom guidance	\$485,000	\$0	\$150,000	\$588,000 <i>Refer to FY18 School Committee Budget Book</i>	School Committee has not yet voted a budget
Amount of regenerated funds at the end of fiscal year as % of total SC budget	0.62% <i>Refer to Figure 16 in FY'19 budget book</i>	0.30% <i>Refer to Figure 16 in FY'19 budget book</i>	1.10% <i>Refer to Figure 16 in FY'19 budget book</i>	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
% increase in non-accommodated costs over prior year's SC budget	4.1%	NM – <i>this is the year the Town Core cost center was moved out from the Schools</i>	3.5%	1.8% <i>Per FY18 Budget Presentation to School Committee – based on Superintendents recommended balanced budget</i>	2.2% <i>Refer to Figure 1 in FY19 budget book</i>
% increase in school accommodated	7.2%	NM – <i>this is the year the Town Core</i>	3.1%	-2.3% <i>Per FY18 Budget</i>	12.1% <i>Refer to Figure 1 in</i>

costs over prior year's SC budget		<i>cost center was moved out from the Schools</i>		<i>Presentation to School Committee – based on Superintendents recommended balanced budget</i>	<i>the FY19 budget book</i>
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6. (Figure 8) Please fill in the table for projected school budget shortfalls assuming the indicated levels of growth in school expenses based on the FY19 budget amount

	% increase in funds (over prior year) available to fund Schools over prior year	% increase in funds (over prior year) required to achieve level service	Surplus or (Deficit)
FY19	3.2	5.2	(\$843,551)
FY20	3.5	5.0	
FY21	3.5	5.0	
FY22	3.5	5.0	

Given the inherent uncertainties in revenue growth, accommodated costs, collective bargaining which impacts labor costs (as discussed, all five collective bargaining agreements end this year), upcoming renewals of significant contracts (i.e. RMHS cleaning contract, bus contract) we are unable to provide this information at this time.

General Budget Summaries

7. (Figure 15) There are multiple entries for Supplies and Materials having an aggregate increase of about \$120k in FY19 over FY18. Why? What is driving this increase in costs?

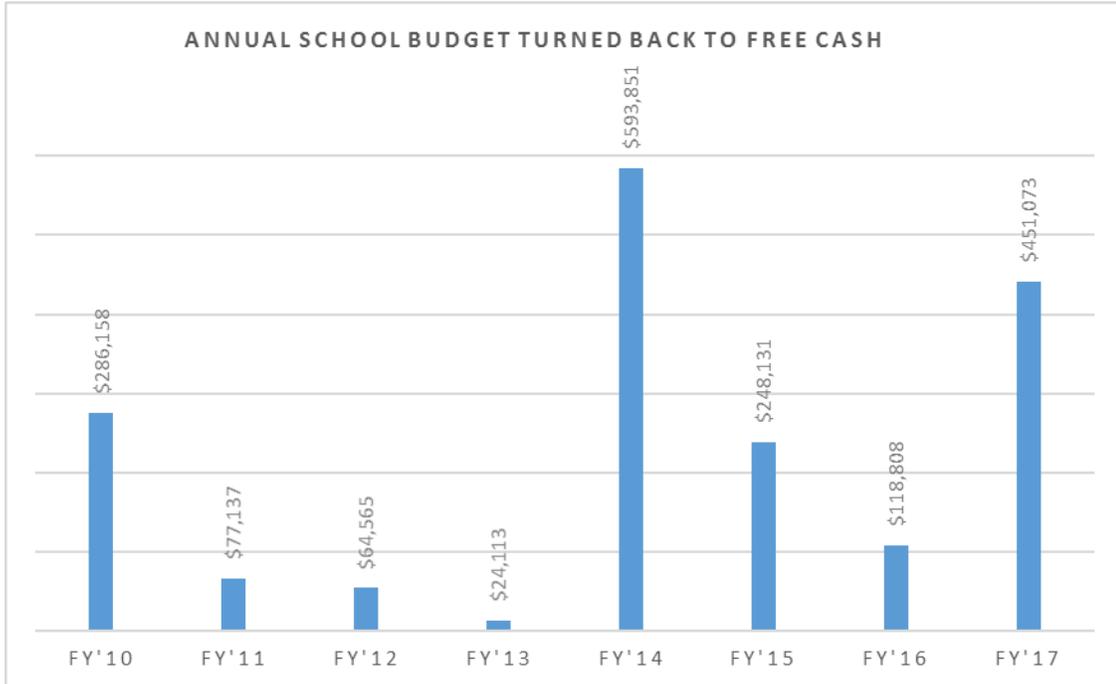
Per review of the Supplies and Materials line items in Figure 15, the total increase in the FY19 budget over the FY18 budget is \$78,136 broken down as follows by cost center:

<i>Cost Center</i>	<i>FY'18 Budget</i>	<i>FY'19 Budget</i>	<i>Change in Budget</i>
<i>Administration</i>	<i>\$8,595</i>	<i>\$7,795</i>	<i>(\$800)</i>
<i>Regular Day</i>	<i>\$598,062</i>	<i>\$672,212</i>	<i>74,151</i>
<i>Special Education</i>	<i>\$48,995</i>	<i>\$48,995</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>District-Wide</i>	<i>\$51,015</i>	<i>\$48,800</i>	<i>(2,215)</i>
<i>Facilities</i>	<i>\$97,590</i>	<i>\$104,590</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$804,257</i>	<i>\$883,392</i>	<i>\$78,136</i>

As discussed during the School Committee presentation, the increase in Supplies and Materials category within the Regular Day Cost Center reflects the restoration of the Building Based Budgets within the FY19 recommended budget. The \$7,000 increase within the Facilities Cost Center reflects a reallocation between "other expenses" and supplies and materials based upon increased prices related to custodial supplies.

8. (Figure 16) Please provide the breakdown of the dollar value of the amount of free cash returned to the town each year, by cost center.

Please refer to Figure 1 in the published budget book for the percentage of free cash returned to the town each year. Below is an update to Figure 19 in the FY18 Budget book to reflect the dollar amount for Fiscal 17. The amounts are tracked and reported in total for the school department.



9. (Figure 16) In the FY19 balanced budget proposal, what is the assumed rate of employee turnover leading to additional funds resulting from either having empty positions or filling vacated positions with new employees at lower total cost?

As discussed during the School Committee Budget Presentations on January 8th and 10th the proposed budget does not include a rate of employee turnover leading to additional funds. We are currently aware of 4.0 FTE teacher retirements at the end of this school year. Three of the four are in high needs positions where we will be most likely hiring at a similar salary as the person that is retiring. This will lead to very little savings due to staff turnover.

10. (Figure 17) How many years was the 1.0 FTE Literacy Coach position in the School budget, prior to its proposed elimination in the FY19 budget?

Per Figure 17, the 1.0 FTE Literacy Coach was added to the School Budget in FY16. The position was added to the FY16 budget through the restructuring of professional development expenses.

Regular Day

11. (Figures 17, 19) Questions about the 1.0 FTE Data Coach

- From Figure 19, it appears we’ve had a grant funded Data Analyst for FY16, FY17, and FY18. Does the Data Coach position represent a transfer of this position from a grant to the payroll of RPS?

Please refer to Figure 5 within the Budget book and to the discussions held on January 8th and January 10th.

Below is an excerpt from Page 9 of the budget book.

Figure 5: FY19 Budget Restructured Areas from FY18 Budget Areas

FY18 Budget Item	Amount	FY19 Restructured Budget	Amount
1.0 FTE Literacy Coach	\$88,000	Data Coach	\$66,000
1.0 High School Secretary	\$35,000	School Business Assistant	\$70,000
Administration Cost Center Expenses	\$13,000		
Remaining Salary from Literacy Coach	\$22,000		
0.5 BCBA	\$45,000	1.0 BCBA	\$75,000
Consultative and Home Services	\$30,000		

A portion of the 1.0 FTE Literacy Coach salary will be restructured to the 1.0 FTE Data Coach position, which is currently being funded out of the School Climate Transformation Grant. In moving forward, our administrative team has determined that the Data Coach position is most critical to provide data information and ongoing support for both teachers and administrators as instructional practices are being made in the classroom.

- If you’ve had this position for 3 years funded by a grant (and you knew when it was going to expire), why weren’t the capabilities provided by this position transferred to the teachers and staff prior to the expiration of the grant?

A districtwide Data Coach has become an increasingly important position for many districts, and we have even had a couple of other districts recently contact us to get more information about how we have now structured the role (as they too are in the process of exploring ways to implement such a position.) With the grant funding, the position originally called for a data analyst who was to focus on behavioral data and progress monitoring strictly as it related to the grant. This grant is meant to build the capacity of staff around behavioral health and behavioral health data (gathering, monitoring, analyzing)—and it has. There are methods of collection, both quantitative and qualitative, action planning steps, and progress monitoring for behavioral interventions. As educational expectations and student outcomes are constantly changing however, there is always room for improvement and staff will likely also continue to make changes as they gain experience with these systems and processes.

The thing about data is that it doesn't necessarily give us answers; instead, it has the ability to get us to ask the right questions that lead us to answers. As we gathered behavioral data and built staff capacity around analyzing and acting upon behavior patterns, staff have realized they have more and more questions around the other domains of education that overlap with behavioral health: academics, discipline, and demographics. They will now be able to delve deeper into these areas through structured data inquiry cycles and analysis on an ongoing basis, so the need for continuing skill building and expanded inquiry processes has become clear.

Overall, this position has evolved from an "analyst" position focused solely on the grant requirements to now a "coach" position that is having tremendous positive impact in areas that extend beyond the grant—including for instance academic progress and interventions. As we are always navigating obstacles to student achievement and exploring new strategies to help all students succeed (it's simply the nature of what educators do), our entire administrative team believes this role has been greatly impactful and anticipates that it will continue to be absolutely critical in the ongoing work of our district every year.

- Are there additional benefits paid for this position starting in FY19?

The position is currently a 1.0 FTE and based upon Town requirements is eligible for benefits. There is no change in the total FTE status of this position.

12. (Figure 18) Questions about the 1.0 FTE Kindergarten teacher and the 2.0 FTE Kindergarten paraeducators:

- What increase in FY19 full day Kindergarten tuition will fully fund both the 1.0 FTE Kindergarten teacher and the 2.0 FTE Kindergarten paraeducators?

We are not able to fully fund these positions out of tuition as we are required to provide free half day kindergarten. The most that we could fund is a .5 of the full day kindergarten position and 1.0 of the 2.0 FTE of the kindergarten paraeducators. We are reviewing the current kindergarten offset to see if we can make this change based on projected enrollment for next year.

- Do we have enough building and classroom space to accommodate the full enrollment in Kindergarten, assuming we add the 1.0 FTE Kindergarten teacher and the 2.0 FTE Kindergarten paraeducators?

Yes

13. (Figure 19) In FY17, we added a 0.9 FTE library/media specialist capability, which was subsequently retained. Can you please explain the expected consequence to students of reducing the FTE in this area to FY16 FTE levels in the FY19 budget, and the estimated cost reduction of such a reduction?

The change in FTE for library media specialists does not reflect an increase but a change in classification as 0.9 related to the High School library/media specialist is reflected as an elementary teacher in the FY'16 actuals and as a library/media specialist in the FY17 actuals and all subsequent years. (Source: FY18 Question and Answer Document)

14. (Figure 24) Questions about the restoration of \$100k in per pupil building expenditures:
- Was money that would otherwise have been returned to Free Cash used to fund the \$100k cut in building based budgets in FY18?

In order to support the \$100,000 cut in the FY18 per pupil building expenditures salary savings and other cost savings in FY17 were utilized to purchase supplies and materials.

- In the past 5 years, what is the lowest dollar amount the district has turned in Free Cash at the end of a fiscal year?

Please refer to Figure 16 in the published budget book.

- What would be the impact on teaching and learning of supporting a \$50k cut in per pupil building expenditures with some of the money that would otherwise be returned to Free Cash at the end of the fiscal year?

The per pupil spending at each building is utilized for the following items which are not budgeted elsewhere within the budget and are purchased throughout the year as needed. Utilizing any money that would otherwise be returned to free cash would impact teaching and learning such that the purchases could not be made on a timely basis or as needed:

- *Building supplies for all offices and classrooms*
- *Texts, materials and consumables for classrooms – includes Math in Focus, Know Atom, Foundations, History Alive, Units of Study, Guided Level Text, Wordly Wise*
- *Classroom furniture*
- *Art and physical education materials and supplies*
- *Paper*
- *Copier leases*
- *Memberships/dues*
- *Instructional software and ongoing software license and maintenance fees – which includes MobyMax, on-line databases (library), Lexia, Reading A-Z, RazzKids, Smartboard maintenance*
- *Testing supplies*
- *Conferences/workshop/professional development materials which are building based*

- *Graduation expenses (high school)*

15. Questions about proposed elimination of Virtual High School:

- When was VHS first made available to RPS students?

Reading began offering Virtual High School as an option to students in 2007.

- Can you describe the degree and rate of use of this resource last year? (e.g., number of students accessing the resource, number of credits earned, etc)

The number of VHS slots that we have utilized has varied greatly over the years. Most recently however, we seem to be averaging around 50-60 slots being used, which is approximately 25-30 per semester. When a course is completed successfully, it appears on the student transcript, and students may earn credits (2 credits for semester course; 4 credits for full-year course). Only VHS Advanced Placement (AP) courses, however, are included in the GPA.

- How did you arrive at the \$18,362 number for VHS?

The \$18,362 figure for VHS was comprised of \$8,000 in fees paid to VHS for participation in the program for a certain number of slots as well as \$10,362 in stipends per the collective bargaining agreement for a VHS online Site Coordinator and VHS online Instructor.

- Are there lower cost options for this resource that may offer a narrower scope of learning opportunities?

We do not believe there are lower cost options.

16. Questions about elimination of elementary chorus stipends:

- How many students participated in elementary chorus in FY18?

There are no students participating in the elementary chorus in FY18 as there were no elementary chorus leaders at the Elementary School.

- What would be the cost per student participating in elementary chorus to fund this activity in FY19?

There were no elementary chorus leaders at the Elementary School and as such there was not ability to have an elementary chorus. The ability to have chorus is contingent on having elementary chorus leaders who are paid a stipend as per the collective bargaining agreement. The total amount of stipends for elementary chorus is approximately \$4,000.

Administration

17. (Figure 20) There are substantial increases in Administrative Assistant (from about \$217k to \$293k). Can you confirm this increase is primarily driven by the requested 1.0 FTE School Business Assistant (\$70k) in Figure 17?

Yes, as discussed on Monday, January 8th the increase is primarily driven by the restoration of School Business Assistant Position through a restructuring of expenses. See below for an excerpt from page 27 of the budget book.

“The restoration of the School Business Assistant position by restructuring some expenses in the Administration cost center, the elimination of a 1.0 FTE High School Secretary Position, and salary savings from the restructuring of the Literacy Coach position. No additional funds were used to restore this position. (Clerical Salaries)”

18. (Figure 20) The cost of employee benefits for district administration doubles from FY18 to FY19 (about \$15k to \$30k). Why?

As discussed on Monday, January 8th the increase is the result of an increase in the employer contribution for Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA). See below for an excerpt from page 27 of the budget book.

“An increase in employer contribution for Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA). This is a benefit in the Teacher’s Collective bargaining agreement and some members qualify with a \$175 contribution. (Employee Benefits).”

19. (Figure 20) The cost of advertising rose about 56% from FY18 to FY19 (about \$3.5k to \$5.5k). Is this related to recruiting for open positions or other factors?

The \$2,000 dollar increased is based upon a review of historical activity and is utilized for recruiting open positions.

20. (Figure 20) The cost of equipment dropped by half (from about \$12k to \$6k) from FY18 to FY19. Why?

The decrease reflects the cost savings from the negotiation of a new 3-year lease on the photocopiers as well a change in the pricing structure of the lease agreement.

21. (Figure 20) Can you please explain the benefits to the administration of the proposed \$18k in professional development (representing about a 17% increase of FY18)?

The \$2,755 increase (17% of line item) represents the contractual professional development amounts per employee contracts as well as amounts related to the proposed new position.

Special Education

22. (Figure 17) Adding 1.0 FTE BCBA

As presented to School Committee on January 10, 2018, the PowerPoint presentation contained detailed information on the caseload of the current BCBA.

- What is the student current case load of the existing BCBA and what would be the impact of adding this additional BCBA position?

The current BCBA has 28 student consults that are driven by IEPs. She has 10 home consults that are also driven by student IEPs. She also provides programmatic consultation to the in-district programs. She has completed 4 FBAs this year, along with 1 extended evaluation.

- Is the estimated amount for this new position appropriate given the compensation for the existing BCBA?

Yes

- What would be the cost savings for this position as budgeted, assuming the alternative is funding the full 1.0 FTE BCBA position using contracted services at the estimate of \$110/hour (page 41)?

The biggest advantage to adding this position is to ensure consistency in service delivery. We have found that having a BCBA who can be accessible to staff and students provides us with a model that is more effective. From a cost perspective, we have 12 students who have regular BCBA consult that we contract with an outside provider to provide. Additionally, we have 8 students who we use a staff member who is a BCBA to coordinate home services and consultation. Not included in this number is when we need to complete a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). Sometimes this can be completed by a school psychologist and other times this needs to be done by an FBA. As noted on the slides from the January 10, 2018 presentation on average a FBA costs us \$1600 per student.

23. (Figures 17, 19) Adding RISE preschool teacher (1.0 FTE) and preschool paraeducators (3.0 FTE)

- In Figure 19, I note that the pre-school teacher FTE has increased from 4.9 in FY15 to 7.3 in the proposed FY19 budget. Why? Is the need for these positions drive by an unexpected increase in RISE enrollment, or other factors?

The increase in pre-school Teacher FTE has increased due to the addition of additional classrooms (including 3 new sub separate classrooms) as well as changes in teacher allocation on the IDEA grant as the teachers allocated to the IDEA grant change year to year.

- What has been the RISE enrollment the past 3 years?

Please see below an excerpt from Table C2: Historical Enrollment by School included in Appendix C in the FY'19 Budget Book

	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
RISE	65	67	72	68	65	76	67	90	100	105	103	95	94	91	94

- Please explain how you anticipate these positions will be needed to meet student needs in RISE over the next 3 years.

The District has an obligation to have services in place for eligible students when they turn 3 years old. The District works closely with Early Intervention to gather as much information as possible as early as possible. Generally, the District is notified about potential students 6 months prior to his or her 3rd birthday. As a result, there would not be a way of projecting the needs for the next 3 years.

24. Are all of the additional 3.0 FTE special education paraeducators (\$72k) for special education programs required to comply with student IEP requirements?

Any special education paraeducators included in the budget are driven by student IEPs. The Director of Student Services, Team Chairs and Building Principals work together to ensure that all IEP services are being implemented which may require the addition of special education paraeducators. Team Chairs and Building principals develop and review the schedules of all paraeducators to ensure that they are based solely on student IEP needs.

Athletics & Extracurricular Activities

25. Please explain why a decrease in anticipated user fee revenue leads to the \$50k reduction in athletics revolving account offset. What % of this reduction in user fee revenue resulted from the failure to raise the family cap on fees, compared to the increase in aggregate number of students on free and reduced lunch?

We currently do not have a full year of data for the impact of not increase the family cap as well as the impact of free and reduced, also throughout the first two weeks of a season a student can drop out of the sport and receive a refund, we also issue refunds to students if they are injured and unable to participate. To date (for fall and winter) we have 29 families (total of 59 students) who have reached the family cap. In addition, for the fall and winter we have 36 students (49 sports) who qualify for free and reduced. To date the impact is approximately \$29,200.

26. By how much would we need to raise the athletic fees in FY19 to cover the cost of the eliminating the two athletic games in FY19, assuming the family cap is not increased? How does this number change if the family cap is increased commensurate with the increases in fees?

The Athletic User fees were increased in the FY'18 budget and at this point we do not recommend another increase. The proposed change would be to increase the family cap by \$225.

27. Why are you recommending an increase in the High School Drama Stipends of over \$19k in a budget when so many other classroom resources are being cut? Wouldn't this amount alone pay for Virtual High School, or a Regular Education Tutor (see Figures 2 and 3)?

As discussed during the School Committee presentations, the proposed increase in the High School Drama is based upon a review of historical actuals if two musical productions are presented by the students participating in Extra Curricular Activities.

28. The amount budgeted for Royalties in Extracurricular (Figure 34) increased from \$959 to \$3,000 from FY17 to FY18. The \$3k amount is retained for FY19. What would be the impact to reducing this amount to FY17 levels?

The \$2,041 increase is an estimate utilized in building the Extra-Curricular department budget and is dependent upon the actual shows that are produced. Reducing the amount would potentially limit the array of shows that could be selected from when determining the productions put on by the Extra-Curricular Department.

Districtwide Networking and Technology

29. Please explain why the Software budget (Figure 35) increases from \$6k to \$32k

As discussed on Monday, January 8th at the School Committee meeting the increase reflects the inclusion of the renewal for our anti-virus protection which is expiring in the current year as well as anticipated increases in other contract renewals.

30. Can you confirm the full increase in contract services (Figure 37) from about \$214k to \$295k results from the applicable terms of a previously-entered multi-year contract? Is there an opportunity to re-negotiate this contract for FY19 to reduce this cost increase? (e.g., a \$50k in FY19 cost in exchange for a longer contract)

Renegotiating a revised price through an extension of the contract would be in violation of Massachusetts General Law. If the members of the School Committee would like to extend the contract it would require us to break the current contract and put the services out to bid.

General Questions

31. How many hours of work per weeks qualify a RPS employee for benefits?

The following link to the Town of Reading benefits page documents the benefits available to all Town employees:

<https://www.readingma.gov/human-resources/pages/employee-benefits>

As indicated on the Town website, to qualify for health benefits, all Reading employees (RPS or Municipal) must work at least 20 hours per week.

32. Can we get a short history (maybe 5 years) of the percent of RPS students who qualify for free and reduced lunch? Can this be broken down by level (elementary, middle, and high).

Please refer to Table C5 on Page 77 in the FY19 budget book for a historical enrollment history of the high needs populations. Over the last five years the percent of students on free and reduced lunch has grown from 6.6% to 10.2%. The charts below break down the information by level for the past five years.

Elementary	Free & Reduced	Total Enrollment	% Free & Reduced
SY 12-13	166	2043	8.13%
SY 13-14	189	2014	9.38%
SY 14-15	251	1999	12.56%
SY 15-16	231	2002	11.54%
SY 16-17	211	1921	10.98%
Middle School	Free & Reduced	Total Enrollment	% Free & Reduced
SY 12-13	78	1058	7.37%
SY 13-14	78	1011	7.72%
SY 14-15	133	1073	12.40%
SY 15-16	110	1021	10.77%
SY 16-17	97	1039	9.34%
High School	Free & Reduced	Total Enrollment	% Free & Reduced
SY 12-13	99	1274	7.77%
SY 13-14	93	1295	7.18%
SY 14-15	110	1248	8.81%
SY 15-16	114	1269	8.98%
SY 16-17	110	1253	8.78%
RISE	Free & Reduced	Total Enrollment	% Free & Reduced
SY 12-13	0	116	0
SY 13-14	7	113	6.19%
SY 14-15	7	100	7.00%
SY 15-16	2	106	1.89%
SY 16-17	2	100	2.00%
Out of District	Free & Reduced	Total Enrollment	% Free & Reduced
SY 12-13	0	48	0
SY 13-14	0	47	0
SY 14-15	1	62	1.61%
SY 15-16	6	60	10.00%
SY 16-17	7	63	11.11%

33. Page 71, Table B3. What constitutes the category of instructional leadership?

Instructional leadership is comprised of Department heads, school leadership (principals and school office staff), and admin technology (non-instructional building technology).

34. Page 25, Figure 19, Staffing by Cost Center and Position. Under Regular Education, FY19 has 1 FTE planned for Instructional Coach. I thought this position was currently unfilled, and the plan was to not fill it in FY19.

The position of Literacy Coach was not filled in FY18 and we have been using that funding this year to provide training in elementary literacy and mathematics instruction and the expenses for substitute teachers for those trainings. Next year, we are proposing to restructure that position to the data coach position, which is currently being funded as .2 in the budget and the remaining .8 in the school transformation grant. The 1.0 FTE indicated on the chart under Instructional Coach for FY19 is the data coach position.

35. Had we had a level service budget, the increase would have been 5.2%. Can we break this hypothetical increase into accommodated and unaccommodated costs?

As shown on Figure 1 on page 5, Non-Accommodated costs are projected to increase 2.2% and Accommodated costs are projected to increase 12.1%. All of the cuts made to balance the budget were made within the Non-Accommodated costs. As noted, we will continue to monitor the accommodated costs and will be seeking additional reimbursement opportunities under the circuit breaker extraordinary relief process.

36. On page 5, in the Superintendent's message, the following comment is made: "It should be noted that during our budgeting process we made a conscious decision to budget less for special education and transportation than we normally would. It is most likely we will need to ask for additional funding from Town Meeting in FY19 in this area." Can you explain the thinking behind this change in strategy for budgeting these costs? Also, what impact, if any, would a successful override vote have on the potential need to request additional funds from Town Meeting for these costs?

Our current projected FY19 costs for special education out of district transportation and tuition exceed what the town has allocated for special education accommodated costs by \$133,000. If we fully funded this difference, we would have had to have made additional cuts to non-accommodated areas, most likely to teaching positions in Regular Day. We will continue to monitor these costs, apply for state extraordinary relief, and determine in FY19 if we need to go to Town Meeting for additional funds. This practice is commonly done by Municipal government when there are cost overruns in snow and ice removal or other accommodated costs.

Regular Day Cost Center

37. Page 33, Figure 22. Substitute line item is going up \$102,685 (54.2%). While I understand this is to reinstate funds that were cut last year to protect teaching positions, and can see that the new amount is consistent with prior years, I'd like to see a breakdown of substitute use the past 3 – 5 years with reasons for substitute need. I'd also like to see YTD sub use numbers with reasons for substitute need. Is there any way we could reduce this line item?

The three-year historical average for substitute teachers is approximately \$293,000 which is what the FY19 proposed budget figure of \$292,205 was based upon. The tables below provide a breakdown of daily substitutes the past three years.

2016-2017			
Reason	Total Hours	Total Days	Cost (\$)
Vacancy Position	2,360.63	337.23	\$ 36,012.11
Bereavement	666.09	95.16	\$ 10,161.40
Family Illness	2,801.34	400.19	\$ 42,735.27
Field Trip	606.70	86.67	\$ 9,255.39
Jury Duty	148.74	21.25	\$ 2,269.07
Other	703.57	100.51	\$ 10,733.17
Personal Day	2,743.54	391.93	\$ 41,853.51
Personal Illness	4,433.43	633.35	\$ 67,633.28
Prof. Development	5,544.16	792.02	\$ 84,577.80
Grand Total	20,008.20	2,858.31	\$ 305,231.00

2017-2018 - through January 5th			
Reason	Total Hours	Total Days	Cost
(Vacancy Position)	379.16	54.17	\$ 4,194.74
Bereavement	279.94	39.99	\$ 3,097.05
Family Illness	1,608.66	229.81	\$ 17,797.02
Field Trip	164.12	23.45	\$ 1,815.70
Jury Duty	123.10	17.59	\$ 1,361.89
Other	317.64	45.38	\$ 3,514.13
Personal Day	1,391.66	198.81	\$ 15,396.29
Personal Illness	2,347.31	335.33	\$ 25,968.89
Prof. Development	3,626.15	518.02	\$ 40,117.03
Religious Holiday	69.31	9.90	\$ 766.79
Grand Total	10,307.05	1,472.44	\$ 114,029.54
2014-2015			
Reason	Total Hours	Total Days	Cost
Vacancy Position	2,066.81	295.26	\$ 29,566
Bereavement	772.38	110.34	\$ 11,827
Family Illness	2,645.72	377.96	\$ 38,436
Field Trip	532.77	76.11	\$ 6,800
Jury Duty	124.16	17.74	\$ 2,986
Personal Day	2,920.21	417.17	\$ 44,269
Personal Illness	5,248.09	749.73	\$ 79,829
Prof. Development	5,050.41	721.49	\$ 81,950
Grand Total	19,373.13	2,767.59	\$ 295,663

2015-2016			
Reason	Total Hours	Total Days	Cost
Vacancy Position	1,150.09	164.30	\$ 16,212
Bereavement	754.29	107.76	\$ 10,632
Family Illness	3,917.93	559.70	\$ 55,217
Field Trip	483.45	69.06	\$ 6,809
Jury Duty	176.51	25.22	\$ 2,483
Other	21.00	3.00	\$ 307
Personal Day	3,056.01	436.57	\$ 41,885
Personal Illness	4,730.89	675.84	\$ 66,245
Prof. Development	5,503.82	786.26	\$ 79,254
Grand Total	19,793.99	2,827.71	\$ 279,044

38. Page 33, Figure 22. There is a very steep increase in contract services (\$73,800 or 95.6%). This is due to two increases: instructional services and transportation. Can you explain the \$25,000 increase in “instructional services”? Also, I understand the need for a second regular day bus, but would like to know if fees might cover some of this cost. Of the \$48,800 increase in transportation, how much is due to contractual increases, and how much is due to the need for a second bus?

The \$25,000 increase in “instructional services” reflects the bi-annual YRBS survey which is conducted as well as the addition of translation services within the Regular Day Budget. Historically all translation services were budgeted within the Special Education budget while a portion of the services are not tied to Special Education.

The increase in the transportation line item is related to three items: contractual increases in the bus rate for the third year of the contract, an increase in homeless transportation based upon current homeless numbers as well as the addition of a second bus for non-mandated transportation.

We have seen an increase in homeless transportation and next year’s budget reflects an increase of \$22,250. The addition of the second bus will add approximately \$22,900 and the rate increase adds approximately \$3,650.

39. Page 33, Figure 22. Supplies and materials are up 12.4% (\$74,150). \$46,971 of this increase (63%) is due to science materials, which are up 88%. Can you explain this growth in science materials and supplies? Is there a way to control these costs better?

The increase in the figures reflects the restoration of the building based budgets to the FY17 levels (not actually an increase in overall costs). Each building principal allocates their building based budgets based upon the needs of the buildings. The science materials reflects the allocation by the building principals towards the elementary science curriculum resources. It's important to note, however, that the overall bottom-line total has not increased by very much—as other items have been adjusted by principals to accommodate the change.

40. Page 33, Figure 22. The “other” line under supplies and materials is up \$9,483 (22.6%). While I know this increase may be due to how principals use their building based funds, can we get an explanation for this increase? What is included in “other.”

This category is part of the overall building based budgets which are allocated by each building based principal. The category includes miscellaneous supplies that are used across multiple categories as well as and instructional technology supplies. The increase reflects movements made by principals in allocating the building based supplies as well as the overall increase in the building based budget from the FY'18 budget. There are decreases within out building based line items and as such the total budget does not change, rather the initial allocation of the budget changes. As discussed, the overall building based budgets were increased by \$100,000 from the FY'18 budget.

Special Education Cost Center

41. 86.8% of the increase in the FY19 budget occurs in this cost center. One driver is the increase in out of district placements. Page 38, Figure 25 indicates we have 16 more students out of district compared to last year. Without violating student privacy, can you break down at what level these OOD placements are occurring (elementary, middle, or high)? Also, what type of disabilities (social emotional, learning, physical, etc.) are causing these students to require education outside the district?

In the Budget Book for FY 19 on page 39, Figure 26 there is a breakdown of the grade level for the Out of District Students (OOD). As was stated on January 10, 2018 there has been an increase in the number of high school students that are requiring placement outside of the district. The slides that were presented on January 10, 2018 provide a breakdown of the placements that Reading students are attending. We have more students with social and emotional needs combined with another disability that require an out of district placement.

Districtwide Programs Cost Center

42. It appears that the Athletics Budget is increasing 7.4% (\$41,566). However, this, I believe, includes an offset reduction due to the family cap not increasing last year and the increase in student athletes who qualify for financial assistance due to financial need. It would seem to me, that were we able to keep the offset the same (if we increased the family cap AND If we didn't have an increase in the number of students with financial need), this cost center would have, in fact, decreased. Is this understanding correct?

Excluding the change in the offset, the remaining line items within the Athletics Budget are budgeted to collectively decrease by \$8,434.

43. Can you explain the \$19,465 (37.3%) increase in RMHS drama stipends?

The increase is to be more in line with increases in FY17 actual expended due to the types of shows that were offered that year. Typically, four shows are budgeted each year and when there are more musicals, there are more stipends. The FY19 budget reflects 2 musicals and 2 non-musicals.

MUNIS Budget

44. Pages 1 – 4. There are some significant decreases in various copier lease lines. What is the cause of these decreases?

Effective August 1, 2017, we entered a new three-year copier lease. Due to the efforts of the Central Office Administrative staff (IT Manager and Director of Finance) we negotiated a decrease in the monthly copier leases.

45. Page 3. What causes the 78.7% increase in the instructional specialist line?

The increase in the instructional specialist line reflects the restructuring of the Literacy Coach position within the FY19 budget. As discussed during the December School Committee Meeting and subsequently during the Budget presentations, the FY18 budget initially included a 1.0 Literacy Coach. Subsequent to the finalization of the FY18 budget, the open position was not able to be filled and the funding was reallocated during FY18 for professional development as well as to restore substitute teachers. Within the FY19 budget the funding has been restructured to fund the 1.0 Data Coach fully within the Operating Budget as currently that position is funded out of the School Climate Transformation Grant.

46. Page 31. There is a significant increase (110.3%, \$50,606) in the custodian II line. What is causing this increase?

The decrease is a change in classification from Custodian I to Custodian II for certain members of the collective bargaining unit upon attainment of credited years of service. Per Figure 37 in the Budget book, the total increase in the Custodian salary line item is 1.4%.

47. What is our percentage of Accommodated Costs (p. 3)?

Accommodated costs are costs that are necessary to fund and usually go up higher than 2.5%. This includes Special Education Out of District Tuition and Transportation, Snow and Ice Removal, Utility costs, and debt services. Once the total revenue is determined for the entire Town of Reading budget, accommodated costs are removed first from available funds. The remaining funds are then split between schools and town, 64% and 36%.

48. Do we do Exit interviews for school districts or families of students who have withdrawn from In-District SPED Programs – whether from Reading or outside districts?

We do not exit interview the families who chose to remove their children from the Reading Public Schools. Students leave the Reading Public Schools for a variety of reasons and we do not complete exit surveys for any of those families and/or students. The administrators in the District are available and willing to meet with families at any time about their experience in the in-district special education program or their experience in general. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Services hold office hours for the purpose of hearing feedback from parents and staff members.

49. If we are able to hire the HR Generalist is collecting Exit Interviews on her list of responsibilities?

Because family interviews is not under the description of personnel or payroll, the HR generalist being proposed in the Reconstruction budget would not be responsible for these exit interviews.

50. It was said that Reading students are accommodated first for special programs. Have we run out of space for out-of-district students and the tuition?

Tuitioning in a student from another district does require that we have the space for the student and that the student is a match for the program. For some of our programs we do not have the space and other programs we can accommodate the referrals. When we receive referrals the Director of Student Services communicates with the building Principal and Team Chair of the building. The Team Chair know the current enrollment as well as potential referrals.

51. Would it be prudent for us to increase the family cap for athletic fees since we are not seeing any decline in enrollment?

We currently do not have a full year of data for the impact of not increase the family cap as well as the impact of free and reduced, also throughout the first two weeks of a season a student can drop out of the sport and receive a refund, we also issue refunds to students if they are injured and unable to participate. To date (for fall and winter) we have 29 families (total of 59 students) who have reached the family cap. In addition, for the fall and winter we have 36 students (49 sports) who qualify for free and reduced. To date the impact is approximately \$29,200.

The Athletic User fees were increased in the FY'18 budget and at this point we do not recommend another increase. The proposed change would be to increase the family cap by \$225.

52. Can more of the money needed for the musical come from the Drama Revolving Account and PSST Money – for instance the difference between what would have been spent on the winter plays vs the extra fees for the musical?

Currently, based upon the current offset budgeted the Drama Revolving Account is projected to decrease over the next two years, if an increase were budgeted for FY'19 it would most likely not be sustainable.

PSST donations cannot be budgeted as these are donation based and require acceptance by the School Committee.

53. Are there any 'collaborative' discounts on technology fees? Are there any local companies who could provide this support as part of their coverage? Might any of these companies consider underwriting our tech fees or provide tech support?

Technology support requires a specific skill set that needs to be sustainable over time. When there are immediate classroom technology needs, teachers need to know that there will be a technician or technology staff member that will be able to address the issue in a timely manner.

Any time we use volunteer support, we need to have administrative support available to supervise the volunteers. We do not have the administrative capacity to supervise volunteer technology support. In addition, volunteer support is usually not regular or sustainable, which would create challenges when trying to get projects or ongoing tickets addressed.

54. Personnel cuts of 13 FTEs from 7 MS, 4 ES, and 2 FTE of Tutor time – offset by need for 10 New FTEs due to RISE and Kindergarten needs – Can current elementary school teachers fill any of these new FTE needs?

The staffing requests in the FY19 budget have already taken into account any shifting in job responsibilities and assignments at the different levels.

55. Could elementary school chorus be included within the school day, as was done in the past? Would we still need to pay a stipend, given the contractual need for prep time for the music teacher?

Unfortunately, a music teacher's schedule at the elementary level is already very tight because we share music staff between schools. In addition, it would be problematic to offer chorus at the elementary level during the school day because it would be very difficult to schedule, given the demands of the current schedule.

56. For the Restructured budget: Would it still be beneficial to create a financial buffer by keeping this reduction of one home game and one away game. Is this eliminating a town from our competition?

The reconstruction budget restores the athletic game schedule to current FY18 levels. If we chose not to include this line item in the reconstruction budget, the total budget amount would be \$25,000 less. We could not save the funding for something else. We would be eliminating the equivalent of two non-league games from the schedule. We would continue to honor the Middlesex League schedule under this proposal.

57. Does this budget take into account the expenses that are impending to provide CRV compensatory services owed to students whose IEPs were compromised by the violations and by the missing Reading Specialist? Where are those recorded? I am confirming that the Reading Specialist position in the high school for the Bridge Program has been filled? Are the needs of these students being met during the reg school day?

The majority of the compensatory services for the OCR case will occur during the current school year and will be funded out of the current FY18 budget. If there are additional compensatory services that need to be offered in the next fiscal year, they will be funded in the FY19 budget. We have the staffing available at the high school to provide the specialized reading services that are required for students with IEPs.

58. I thought the decision was not to provide 2 separate budgets because it is unknown what the override amount would be? I understood that instead, there would be a list of un-prioritized services that could be added depending upon adequate funds raised by an override. This is the wording you use in the second part of the paragraph, but I fear that promising a second budget would raise expectations unrealistically, especially because we don't know if there will be an override vote...

We have not provided 2 separate budgets. The only budget that has been presented at this time is the balanced budget. The reconstruction budget is simply an unprioritized list within categories that contain a narrative that tells the story of why we are restructuring our school district to improve student learning. If there is an override ballot question and it is supported by the community, we will update our budget to reflect the changes prior to Town Meeting.

59. Is there room on buses to allow non-mandatory transportation students to pay for their ride to off-set transportation costs? Would this be allowed within the revolving account rules?

We do currently offer non-mandatory transportation for students, but the number of riders is not enough to offset the full cost of the bus which is partially related to the number of free and reduced students riding the bus.

60. Are there transportation collaboratives like with SPED to help pay the cost of athletic transportation? In terms of reg mandated school transportation, it might help the public to know the regulations around buses. I.e: Elementary students cannot be transported with High Schoolers...

We work closely with the Athletic Director to combine as many bus runs as possible as it relates to athletics. The ability to do so is dependent on the number of students participating (due to space limitations on the bus) and the amount of time and location between when each sport plays its respective games (for freshmen, JV and varsity teams). We are not aware of any sports collaboratives.

61. Are there any local businesses willing to offset the costs for the pool and ice rink? Could parent groups help ferret these sources out?

We have worked with the YMCA and Burbank Ice Arena to attempt to keep the annual rate increases minimalized. Based upon these discussions we do anticipate annual increases in the pool and ice rates. The increases are dictated by the YMCA and Burbank Ice Arena. Any donations to offset the increases would need to be presented to the School Committee for acceptance in advance of the budget season in order to budget appropriately and each year the budget would be dependent upon such donations to keep pace with the rate increases being incurred. The challenge with local businesses and or parent groups providing support is that it would need to be sustainable and not create greater financial challenges the following year if the funding is not donated.

62. If we combine kindergarten classes across schools, can we adjust start time so that families can successfully manage the logistics of drop off? Would it help if kindergarteners started in a strategically placed school to level off lower class sizes or accommodate half day kindergarten and the next year be placed in their neighborhood school? Adjustment could be facilitated through PTO Programming and transition programming...

If we were to move to a satellite program for half day at a few schools instead of all schools, we would adjust the start and end time to allow parents time for drop off and pick up between schools. We are constantly looking at ways to keep our kindergarten classes within the 18-22 class size range keeping in mind our resource constraints.

63. I think that the SC should advise the Select Board regarding a dollar amount and specifying a duration for a potential override should the Select Board so choose. When will we discuss this possibility and specify that amount and timing of our recommended override need?

Additional dialogue on the FY19 Superintendents Recommended Budget as well as the proposed Reconstruction Budget will occur during the meetings scheduled for Thursday, January 18th and Monday, January 22nd.

64. The repetition in the original budget document seemed cumbersome. Could an index make this easier and less overwhelming?

We appreciate the feedback on the budget book and presentation, efforts were made this year to streamline the book as well as to reorganize the information into a more useful format. We strive to continually look for ways to further enhance the information. We will look to add an overall index.

65. Why is no COLA budgeted for Supt? – this is problematic if the Supt gets a good review and is working at his capacity on behalf of the district. This is a bad idea. This Superintendent received favorable evaluations. Trying to find a more capable and less expensive superintendent who procures as many grants in a district that demands such high standards is unlikely and will cost us more money in search, implementation, and expertise.

As stated in the balanced budget presented to the School Committee the Superintendent is recommending that there be no COLA for that position. While we appreciate the feedback, it is important that the CEO of the School District send a very clear and important message to all of the staff and the community the challenges that we are facing with this budget and the reductions that we will be facing.

66. Is there a way to limit the amount of time our administration has to spend replying to redundant questions and clarifying misinformation on the web? Could there be a delegation team for instance of budget representatives who are assigned social media sites to correct the mistakes as they are published?

With the support of the School Committee, we have identified ways to streamline the budget process this year and avoid redundancy. If the School Committee would like to discuss a way to clarify misinformation on the web, that will create a greater discussion with the entire School Committee. However, it should be noted that since we currently do not respond officially to misinformation on the web, any change in policy will result in additional administrative time.

67. I liked Nicole's idea of having a summer program that students could pay for to learn about the technology that the RPS offers and then hiring them to supplement our technologist. I realize this cannot take the place of staff, but it could offer additional levels of support and opportunities for students in a challenged budget.

We agree that having students address minor technology issues is a great use of students, as well as, giving them additional technology skills. We did have a program similar to this a few years ago called Rocket Help Desk. Unfortunately, we do not have the capacity right now to train and supervise students during the school year. As you know, we reduced a 1.0 FTE technician in the FY18 budget and it is having a significant impact of the response time of addressing tickets.

68. It would be helpful to explain how Reg Day expenditures decrease by .5%, while the administration increases by 12.6%. Looking at the numbers, I can see this is related to the amount of the budget – administration being very small (\$1 .04 mil) so that any increase looks larger, while reg day is larger (\$24.82 mil)

As discussed on Monday, January 8th the increase within the Administration Cost Center is primarily driven by the restoration of School Business Assistant Position through a restructuring of expenses. As discussed Monday, January 8th and Wednesday January 10th, the reduction in the Regular Day expenditures is directly related to the reductions made to present a “balanced budget” as well as the restructuring of the assistant principal secretary position. The majority of the proposed budget reductions have been made within Regular Day.

69. Are there plans being made to ensure that we do not lose our RCASA Administrators along with the Transformation Grant expiration?

The RCASA Administrators are funded via the Safe and Drug Free Community grant which is managed through the Town and not through the School Department. RCASA is located in the police department budget.

70. Is it possible to do drug and TB testing on Substitute teachers without doing a whole physical for those subs who will be very part-time? Could a waiver be granted by the town?

As required by the Town of Reading, all new employees (Municipal and Schools) undergo a physical and mandatory drug testing through Quadrant, who is contracted by the Town. Any changes in that policy would need to be addressed by the Town.

71. How do our legal fees work? Do we pay per request or are we allocated a certain amount on a retainer?

Our legal fees are based on the amount of time that is spent by our legal counsel and/or associates on the legal issues times a set rate.

72. Are there plans to do another enrollment study? Is it warranted?

The cost of an enrollment study is approximately \$5,200. We have not included the cost of an enrollment survey within the FY'18 or FY'19 budgets.