

FY23 Budget: Personnel

March 2, 2022

Mariah Nobrega

Staffing supports COVID impacts

- Page 2: “Our primary focus remains high-quality teaching and learning for all students and especially for students in groups we know are disproportionately impacted by opportunity and outcome gaps...In addition, we are focused on addressing any COVID-specific gaps, not only in academics but in socioemotional support and learning.”

Smaller sections also were used to offset ongoing enrollment uncertainty

- Page 32: “PSB must acknowledge the significant decrease in enrollment ahead of the 2021-22 school year. With lower overall numbers of students, we must right-size each of our schools to reflect the expected enrollment for 2021-22. Class size averages have been preserved to remain at the same expected size as the 2019-20 school year, with a target of 19 students per class. For FY22, PSB will have 258 elementary sections districtwide, with the ability to absorb more than 500 students across the district without adversely impacting target class sizes pending uncertain enrollment over the summer period. “

The need to mitigate impacts and maintain flexibility remain priorities for FY23

“Enrollment continues to be the largest, most dynamic challenge for PSB to manage and forecast. K-12 enrollment has gone from 7599 (pre-pandemic in Oct 2019) to 6738 (Oct 2020) to 6673 (Oct 2021). The reduction (12%) was entirely in K-8; BHS has increased from pre-pandemic enrollment. Survey data show a combination of factors that have contributed to the pandemic enrollment drop, primarily international students who left and were not replaced due to border restrictions, and families departing to independent schools.

Given this enrollment reduction, it is reasonable to consider a commensurate reduction in staff. The intertwined questions/issues that have guided discussion are:

- **If/when enrollment will return entirely or nearly to pre-pandemic levels:** At this moment it appears that COVID is shifting from a pandemic to an endemic phase, thus opening the possibility of returning to more typical international student levels. We should know more over the summer and into this fall. If staffing is cut back, and enrollment ticks sharply upward, we will have very large class sizes.
- **Recovering from pandemic impact on academics and social-emotional learning:** With school closure in spring 2020 and hybrid learning in much of 2020-2021, students continue to need enhanced support. Cutting staff would mean reduced ability to mitigate ongoing pandemic impacts.
- To hedge against both of these challenges, PSB set a goal of an average of 19 students per K-8 section for FY22, ultimately landing at 18 (Oct 2021). **Given the volatility and uncertainty of our enrollment, the superintendent has recommended that this strategy continue for FY23.** Standard PSB class size guidelines are less than 22 students in K-2 and 25 students in 3-8; should enrollment not return in the endemic phase, a return to more typical class sizes will be appropriate to consider starting in FY24.”

-- PSB Budget Drivers FY23 (sent to SB Feb 2022)