

**The Public Schools of Brookline
Superintendent's FY2014 Budget Message
Addendum #2
Thursday, March 21, 2013**

The FY2014 School Department Budget continues to present the School Committee, administration and our community with difficult choices. Clearly, the present situation requires that valued programs and initiatives will need to be curtailed and/or reduced due to insufficient revenues. To date, we have utilized the "Superintendent's FY2014 Budget Message" and "Addendum #1" to recommend a spending plan that, while certainly not ideal, does further the mission of our school system and respects our fiscal commitments to the Town of Brookline during a very difficult budget year.

However, we also believe that there is at least one way to achieve additional revenues and preserve or enhance many of the other priorities of this school system. While these strategies present additional concessions and challenges, implementation of the following series of revenue options would restore/enhance the Enrichment and Challenge Support (ECS) program, provide adequate staffing to meet sectioning requirements at Brookline High School, and provide an adequate baseline to jumpstart our technology initiative.

We do not advance this plan to the School Committee lightly. In fact, we do not endorse specific aspects of the plan, including charging a fee for full-day kindergarten. However, we believe that this plan presents the most balanced package for moving the budget discussions and system forward. In addition, these ideas, if adopted, would position the School Committee and community to continue the important conversation about long-term revenue options that adequately address our historic enrollment growth and other critical funding priorities.

The following six elements would, if combined, collectively maintain our system priorities:

1. Community Contributions. Permit parents and community groups to partially pay for staff salaries associated with the system-wide Enrichment and Challenge Support (ECS) restoration proposal, which is described below, under the following conditions:
 - a. The monies will be raised on a "one time only" basis for FY2014 to provide the School Committee time to review the program and look for future revenue supports;
 - b. the monies will be donated to a third party such as the Brookline Community Foundation (BCF) and are earmarked for a system-wide ECS program, not an individual school or teacher; and
 - c. no decisions are made about the level of restoration possible until and unless the minimum amount needed has been raised.The total funds available through this proposal could be anywhere from zero to \$100k, depending on the level of support generated.
2. Full-Day Kindergarten. Implement a \$1,000 per student fee for families who wish to access the free full day kindergarten option beginning with those entering school in September 2013. This would require us to offer a half-day kindergarten option for those

not interested in paying for the service. Furthermore, we would establish a scholarship program for those needing financial assistance for the full day fee. The total new revenue generated by this proposal is estimated at \$250k to \$400k.

We further recommend that the full day charge remain in effect until the School Committee is able to identify alternative sources of revenue to support our ongoing budgetary needs.

3. Reserves. Utilize another \$50k of reserve funds to support the FY2014 operating budget. This will leave us with \$350k available as contingency for exceptional general and special education costs, in addition to contingencies included in our spending plan. Hopefully these remaining funds will not be utilized to offset FY2014 expenditures and, instead will be available for use in the FY2015 budget.
4. High School Staffing. Reduce the number of sections to be eliminated at Brookline High School from 15 (3.0 FTE) to 10 (2.0 FTE). This will provide the Headmaster and her staff with more flexibility in dealing with low-enrollment sections. The cost of this restoration is \$57k.
5. Enrichment and Challenge Support. Restore the ECS program referenced in the restoration/enhancement section of the FY2014 Superintendent's Budget Message. While the base level of funding for this program from system funds would be \$150k, the specific level of restoration/enhancement is contingent on the amount of funding generated from community contributions. Over and above that, the system would accept up to \$100k, which would allow us to create a model of 1.0 FTE Coordinator and 3.0 FTE teacher/coach.

Specifically, we propose to shift the current building-based consulting teacher model to a system-based teacher/coach model. These coaches will work across all schools to increase the capacity of teachers to challenge students by providing direct in-class coaching to classroom teachers in the following areas:

- Utilizing various strategies to differentiate instruction
- Extending the curriculum
- Creating relevant and rigorous interdisciplinary projects
- Integrating technology
- Providing for students' social emotional needs (e.g., organizing peer groups)

The system-based coaching model allows these individuals to better coordinate services to our teachers, allows for more long-term support of grade level and/or grade span teachers, and encourages classroom teachers to implement the coaching strategies throughout their curriculum.

The (up to) three coaches will be led by a system-level coordinator whose duties include:

- Managing Virtual High School program
- Implementing grade/subject acceleration processes
- Coordinating services with Brookline High School

- Leading research on the role of technology
- Leading the investigation of community resources

The overall goal for the program is the identification and sustained implementation of strategies to stimulate thinking, enhance engagement, and intellectually and creatively stretch all students.

6. Technology. All remaining funds generated through the first three (3) elements of this plan and not expended on ECS and high school staffing would be utilized to support the system's commitment to technology.

Specifically, our rapid growth over the past few years means that we must take additional steps to replace our aging classroom computers, provide appropriate computers to teachers, equip our new classrooms, provide audio/visual and peripheral support for classrooms (e.g., basic projection capability in K-12 classrooms), and appropriately outfit our special education learning centers. These items support our plan for the development of a solid foundation of technology needs for the school system so that we are positioned properly to take bigger steps toward innovative use of technology for teaching and learning.

Obviously, these proposals will stimulate a great deal of conversation about the future direction of this school system. The revenue generating strategies described here are designed as a bridge to more permanent sources of revenue and support in the future, while protecting community and school values.

We look forward to the opportunity to provide elected officials, appointed representatives, and the community with further explanation of these important proposals over the coming months.