

TO: School Committee

FROM: Emily Parks, Superintendent

DATE: December 4, 2020

RE: Initial Budget Discussion

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As you know, the timeline for the budget development process is a bit later this year given the pandemic. However, we have begun to discuss some budget assumptions internally. We are assuming that the district will return to a fully in-person instructional model by the fall. As we begin the budget development process, we are returning to the approved FY'21 budget and using those staffing allocations (rather than the staff that we actually have in place currently) as the basis for a level services analysis. We have also agreed that when looking at enrollment projections and assessing staffing needs, we will carefully assess the impact of the staffing cuts we made to the FY'21 approved budget to determine whether or not those positions need to be restored.

Though we anticipate that by the fall the district model will have returned to "normal," we know that there will be needs associated with mitigating the educational impact of the pandemic, for example in special education services, intervention services or SEL initiatives. In addition, we may find that there is a "new normal" where some of the costs associated with additional health and safety measures continue. These issues will have to be carefully considered.

Given the challenges of the current year, our resources (both in terms of funding and time) had to be reprioritized such that we have not been able to focus as much on the district improvement initiatives as we would have liked. For FY'22, we will want to return to those identified priorities, such as the diversity, equity, and inclusion work, and consider how the budget can best support that work.

Finally, though in general the impact of the pandemic has not been positive, we did make some changes out of necessity in our current hybrid model that we may want to consider retaining in the future. Some of those changes may have implications for staffing models.

As always, we will contemplate factors such as meeting contractual obligations and other fixed costs, addressing shifts in enrollment, and maintaining reasonable class sizes.

I look forward to talking with SC next week so that the district leadership team can incorporate your priorities into the FY'22 budget development process.