Meeting Notes:
Due to time constraints the sub-committee started immediately with a presentation from Mary Ellen Dunn regarding food service costs in PSB. Currently school meals are subsidized by the federal government. Three pricing options are available to students, free ($0.00), reduced cost ($0.40), and full cost ($3.25) per meal. A la cart items are available at all schools and meals. In FY’18 delivery of food service was moved to a management company. This allows for the economy of scale in purchasing leverage from a pricing standpoint, as well as the ability to set the menu, function as a director, and even provide options for local sourcing and recycling that is inline with other Town of Brookline initiatives. The PSB School Committee sets the policies surrounding food service in the PSB. Every year there are deficits in the collection of accounts, when Mary Ellen arrived in the district (2015) it was up to $75K. There was a discussion regarding the revolving fund vs. the USDA “grant” as the federal subsidy is practically considered that also considered benefit matching for employees. Currently there is a “Break even” contract that is in place to help protect school regarding collecting money. This works both ways however, as PSB has to make up the difference when sales are short (such as when a healthier a la carte menu saw reduced sales in a recent year).

Next on the agenda was rental properties. There are currently multiple locations that are being rented to house various PSB functions. There are two temples, 62 Harvard St. (aka the “Pierce Loft”), 24 WEBster Place (lease ends October 2019, currently houses 55 PSB staff members including Pierce, BHS, Adult Ed, and Beep staff), the Brookline Teen Center (gym used by Pierce 8th graders), the Korean Church near Town Hall (for Adult & Community Education), and a future plan to use 127 Harvard St. (For the Beep program). Overall $1,165,000 is spent on rental costs for leases plus any service that is included in the lease (power, water, heat, etc.) Leases are part of the CIP (Classroom capacity article) and currently run from FY’19 - FY’22 (except for 24 Webster Place that expires October 2019.) Overall Mary Ellen, Andrew Bott, and Dave P. stated that leases are not desirable - it takes time away from instruction and adds safety risks for kids to walk to offsite leased spaces, leases are usually signed for 10 years which reduces flexibility in changing plans, costs are higher due to unnecessary redundancies due to many, small locations vs. leveraging the benefits of having fewer or a single location (such as with the pre-school program.) As part of this discussion it was noted that building department needed more money to cover the maintenance for additional sq. footage. It was not recorded as to whether this was directly related to rentals, or this was just an overall statement of the current state of things.
The next topic was Matt Gillis presenting on section information, the follow data was presented and shows what 21 students per class would look like from a section standpoint as a continuation of prior year projections from FY’19 through FY’23. Green cells represent schools where there would be more than enough sections to cover the student population based on sections available, red cells not enough sections, and no color where need equalled capacity. Overall 285 sections would be required in FY’19 with only 270 available, leading to a 15 section shortfall.

Matt ran out the data using 22, 23, 24, etc. students per class to illustrate how that would change requirements vs. availability. The overall takeaway was that PSB does not have the capacity to meet its policy requirement for 21 students per section. Mike Sandman asked a few questions regarding non-resident students after Matt’s presentation. He asks what was the marginal cost per student for non-resident students? Beth Jackson Stram answered that some of this data is contained in the 2014 OSC report. She also mentioned along with Dave Pollack that the school committee is teaming up with other METCO towns to ask the state to appropriate more funds for METCO. Applications to METCO are managed by METCO, Inc.

Additional comment from the public was requested at this time, and there were no additional comments.
The sub-committee then returned to review the minutes from the 1/3/2018 and 1/10/2018 meetings. Betsy moved to accept the minutes and Meggan seconded. The minutes were then passed unanimously. The SC ran through writing assignments and agreed to use the 2008 OSC report as a guide. Jeff mentioned that everyone should be working on writing initial drafts of their sub-sections, and that those sub-sections would begin to be reviewed in the 1/24/2018 meeting. At that point the meeting was adjourned.