

Group 1 Recommendations

Presentation Goals

- Present facts and contextual analysis to the Selectmen, School Committee and Voters
- Explain Group 1's recommendations
- Help the Brookline community make an informed decision about how to support the PSB through an override and debt exclusion

Outline of presentation

- Operating: Why we need an override
- Capital: Why we need a debt exclusion
- Community's capacity to pay
- Important Unanswered Questions

Group 1 Discussion and Recommendations

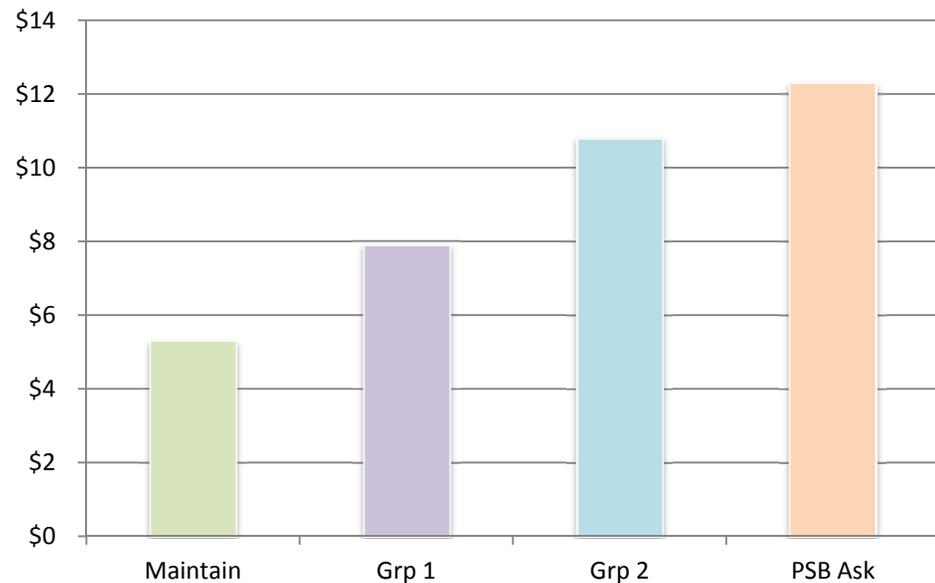
Operating Override

Why an Override?

- School enrollment growth
 - Staffing levels relative to student growth
 - PSB's request for additional enhancements
 - Increased classroom demand

Overview of \$7.9M Recommendation

- Additional \$7.9M to Schools (\$5M override, \$2.3M non-tax revenues, \$0.6M from Town-side savings)
- Data-driven approach applies historic ratio analyses to PSB input
 - Funds all catch-ups to 2006 ratios
 - Maintains all service levels to account for future enrollment growth
- Adds over \$1.6M in enhancements, including mobile devices
- Reflects 65% of PSB 'ask'



How we got to 65%

- Bring all support staff to at least 2006 staff to student ratios
- Support some of requested enhancements:
 - Actual allocation sole purview of School Committee
 - 100% of ECS, Steps to Success, supplies and custodial contract
 - 40% of literacy staff and professional learning and development
 - Other items, e.g., psychologists
- Maintain current ratios for all other areas
 - Benchmark comparison to peer communities, e.g. BCBA
 - Lack of sufficient data and/or definition to support greater funding

Recommendation for Technology

- The core goals of the \$1.8M technology request are system-wide equity, learning tools and preparation for PARCC
- Fund 90% of mobile devices (additional and replacement cycle reduction), carts, applications, mounted projection units
- Develop a sound staffing plan (audit of current staff qualifications, understanding of new and old staff relations, training, establishment of minimum technology qualifications for ETS and librarians, outsourcing and staff reductions)
- Clarify the governance of Town-School technology partnership
 - Coordination called for in 2002, 2008 and in Town Administrator's 2015 Budget Message
 - Need to prioritize investments, align communication among devices, avoid staffing duplication and inefficiencies.
- Explore savings
 - Recapture computer labs for classroom use

Group 1 Discussion and Recommendations

Debt Exclusion

Why a Debt Exclusion?

- Natural revenue growth insufficient to fund Brookline's future capital requirements
 - Require additional borrowing capacity
- Increase in scope and cost of Devotion project
 - OSC instructed not to revisit

B-SPACE view of classroom ‘need’

- B-SPACE Finding: 20 additional classrooms needed by 2019
 - Assumes 21 per class
 - Solutions required on-line by 2017
- Classrooms per entering K class “waterfall” through system
- Proposed projects provide 12 (to 15) additional classrooms
 - Lawrence (4); Devotion (5), BEEP conversions (3 now, and 3 more available in future)
 - Remaining classroom need: 8 classrooms (possibly only 5).
- Static Analysis
 - Assumed all current practices remain unchanged
- OSC Examination
 - Significant investment in new classroom construction and staffing?
 - Or use of tools – changes at the margin within existing policies?

3 Available Tools to Meet Space Needs

- OSC calculates space needs using PSB methodology
 - Classrooms equal total students divided by average class size
 - No distinction made for geographic dispersion or residency
- Group 1 uses available tools, including **changing practices** within **existing** PSB Policies
- Tool 1: make further adjustments to class sizes
 - PSB written policy: “whenever possible...22 to 24 in K-3...25 in Grades 4-12” (Supt. 2011 Budget Msg. p.321)
 - Current K-8 average of 21.14 resulted from an annual increase of 0.167 students per class since 2004
 - E.g., increasing average Kindergarten class size by 1.3 accommodates approximately 40 more students, reduces annual space demand by 2 classrooms, and remains well within class size directives

Tools to Meet Space Needs (cont'd)

- Tool 2: Adjust classroom assignment practices
 - Later assignments in buffer zones (PSB has started); assigning late registrants to closest available (policy change);
 - 2012 buffer zone changes place 1/3 of enrolling students in buffer zones (versus only 1/6 of enrolling students before F12)
 - “Churn” also provides flexibility – 500 students enter and 500 students leave Grades 1 to 8 every year
 - Potential consolidations in upper grades (3 this year)
- Tool 3: Recognize new opportunities to utilize rooms already in existence
 - Mobile devices allow recapture of 4 to 6 computer labs
 - 3 BEEP classrooms that remain in schools

Classroom “Needs”- Available Tools

- Non-Resident Student Policies
 - PSB Policies and Guidelines: “space available basis”
 - Materials Fee: notified no later than June 1 (teachers), June 20 (others)
 - METCO: “district grade and seat availability”
- Current Practice
 - Non-resident students admitted months before resident enrollments are known
 - Materials Fee population has no cap
 - In current SY14-15 K class, early-admitted non-resident students are 86% of the gap between the projected (630) and actual class size (681)
- Options to Amend Current Practices
 - Increase average class sizes by 1.3 to 1.5 to accommodate
 - Defer admissions until resident enrollments are known, and then admit in adherence to space and seat availability policies and guidelines

Group 1 Questions

- Does Driscoll make sense?
 - \$55 million project for 8 additional classrooms
 - B-SPACE report states that Driscoll classroom demand (2014-2019) is only 1 (Table, page 17)
 - Potential Hancock Village Expansion: estimated range of 110 to 150 new students in a different part of Town
 - What is the PSB plan if Driscoll is not funded by the MSBA?
- Substantial expenditures now (when other tools can handle growth)? Or defer expenditures to point when needs are better defined?
- Create “capacity” now, when projects are not defined? Or inform voters of projects being funded?

Group 1 Debt Exclusion Recommendation

- \$23 million debt exclusion
 - Allows Devotion to proceed
 - \$1.6 M debt service covers expansion of Driscoll cafeteria
- Recognizes the need for future overrides for new school projects:
 - Available tools can reduce near-term classroom demand
 - The OSC unanimously seeks a comprehensive facilities study
 - The OSC consensus is that Driscoll may not be the right project
 - Unsure of where real need is
 - New school likely more cost-effective
 - Concern about the impact of expand-in-place on character of neighborhood schools
 - Possible projects include a High School expansion and a Ninth Elementary School
 - Projects should be defined for voters

Group 1 Discussion

Capacity to Pay

Capacity to Pay

- Brookline unique among comparable cities and towns
 - Single family homes; condos; rentals
 - All segments impacted by property tax increases
 - Rental units will ultimately pay-market: Town at full occupancy; leases roll over
- Brookline has greater economic diversity than ‘school peers’
 - Median household income 2/3’s that of school peers
 - Increasingly ‘bar-bell’ population in Brookline
 - “Increases in housing costs could have the unintended consequence of pushing lower-income and older residents out of Brookline” (OSC 14-0, p. 118)
- Property Value Drivers
 - General economy
 - Financing costs
 - Public safety
 - School reputation
 - Urban amenities (public transportation, proximity to Boston and LMA, parks and recreation)

Important Unanswered Questions

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- Rationale for Certain Requests
 - ‘Investment’ should be compared to expected outcomes, e.g.
 - Regular ED BCBA
 - In-district special education programs (selectively analyzed)
 - Technology and technology governance
 - No PSB historic ratio analysis
- No ‘Plan B’
 - No prioritization of requests
 - What happens if MSBA says ‘No’
- Efficacy of Materials Fee Program
- Need for PSB and Town long-range facilities plan