

**Meeting of the  
Instructional/SPED Subcommittee**

**Tuesday, December 16, 2014  
4:30 PM**

**School Administration Building  
417 Rock Street  
Fall River, MA 02720**

**AGENDA**

- Discussion of Benchmark Data
- Discussion of proposed Chapter 74 program(s) for application purposes
- Discussion of district-based licensure programs for teachers of English Language Learners and Students with Special Needs

**MINUTES**

At 4:33 PM Chairman Martins called to order the Instructional/SPED Subcommittee Meeting. A roll call showed Mr. Martins and Mrs. Panchley were present. Mr. Andrade was absent.

Also in attendance were Superintendent Mayo-Brown, CVTE Director, Robert Gadbois, Associate Principal, Dr. Michelle Sylvaria, Principal Paul Marshall, Ms. Ivone Medeiros, Ms. Kelly Cooney, and a member of the press.

Mr. Martins thanked everyone for attending at this busy time of year. He said before they begin with the agenda, there was an old item from the previous meeting pertaining to the Superintendent contacting DESE regarding the goal of CPI and PPI for 2017. He asked if the Superintendent had an opportunity to do so.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she had but asked that he read the Open Meeting Law first.

Mr. Martins read the Open Meeting Law.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown responded that his question at the last Instructional Subcommittee was about how they know that a school is on target to reduce the proficiency gaps by 2017 by 50%. The response that they provided was that the school cannot be a level three. Secondly, if they look at each CPI for each content area within a school, that has to be 75 or more. If they see that the target is at 75, that school, in that content area, is on target to close the gap by 50% by 2017. She explained where that information could be found on the website.

*Transcriber's Note: Dr. Fran Roy joined the meeting during Superintendent Mayo-Brown's response.*

Mr. Martins said he understood that and thought the question was more pointed in that his concern is what happens in 2017 if they have not achieved the CPI goal. He questioned if there would be consequences if the goal was not met.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown responded not at this time. She understood his question to be; a school could hit their target of 75 for PPI but does that mean that they are on target to reduce the gap by 50%?

Mr. Martins said correct.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said the answer is that you have to go into that school's CPI information and if the CPI is at 75 or higher, yes they are. Just because a school gets 75 on their PPI does not mean they are on track. You actually have to go into the CPI.

Mr. Martins said he just needs to know what they are looking for in two years and what the consequences are of not achieving it are.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they have not determined if you do not hit it.

Mr. Martins continued that he understands about the growth factor and what happens with the composite proficiency.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown interjected that it was different than the PPI issue. The way the accountability is set up now, they are more concerned about PPI than CPI.

Mr. Martins responded "until 2017 comes along".

He asked Mrs. Panchley if she had any comments or questions and she did not.

- Discussion of Benchmark Data

Mr. Martins said that this was an item that Mrs. Panchley wanted to discuss and handed the floor over to her.

Mrs. Panchley explained that when they put together the subcommittee descriptions last year for the Accelerated Improvement Plan, part of the description of this subcommittee is to go over the quarterly benchmark data. Knowing that the first term was over, she thought it would be an appropriate time for the information to be presented to see what schools are on track.

Dr. Roy passed out some information and explained it was data they compiled and had already presented to the principals. As they are moving, they are transitioning to be more PARCC like. Every year, the educators work on the benchmarks and tweak them so it is hard to make a comparison to last year. They chunk out the percentage of students who are at 80 and above and those that are 60 or below. The goal is that the school level takes this information to see which of those kids were above 80 or below 60. The first goal of district benchmark data is so that schools can use it well to improve their instruction. At the district level they are looking at it to learn from each other and build internal capacity. She then walked them through the data and noted the district is looking at their 7<sup>th</sup> grade where they seem to be struggling.

Dr. Roy explained the other piece of information they pulled was their grade 3 Dibels data which is their early literacy initiative. The Superintendent has begun to speak to the community about early literacy and they know that if kids are not reading at grade level by grade 3 there is a much higher risk of them dropping out which is why they felt it was important to look at. They are trying to deconstruct why they have such a variance in schools. She noted that at Silvia 77% of students were fine in terms of their

ability to read and getting the words off of the page but there are other schools that are much lower and it is a complex issue around literacy because some of it has to do with what happens outside of school and at home.

Mrs. Panchley asked if they have information on whether kindergarteners went to pre-school or not.

Dr. Roy said they do and Ms. Allard had just updated them on it.

Mrs. Panchley said she thought that would correlate with those numbers.

Dr. Roy agreed. She continued reviewing the remainder of the data and concluded by saying the data handed out were the big items they are using right now in the district to determine what their next work is.

Mrs. Panchley asked if they are not really able to compare it to last year, how do they decide if students are moving in the right direction.

Dr. Roy explained because the curriculum is changing to PARCC, it is hard for them to tell if there is improvement. The goal is that the schools are using the data. When she sees that schools like Viveiros are out-performing everybody else, she knows there are good things going on there because that is not necessarily the population that would be outperforming everybody else. They know that the Henry Lord data is a place that they want to put in more supports. It still helps them look at schools they can learn from and look at those that need more supports.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she thought the other thing to mention is that principals and teachers are using the data to form after school groups such as at Fonseca where they are launching after-school programming four days a week for math and ELA using the data. She noted Letourneau, Greene, and Talbot are starting to do that as well. She was more concerned about how the assessment data should be used to put plans into place at the school because they want the schools to be using the data to identify students who need additional targeted support and then provide them with that support.

Mr. Martins asked if the tests were developed by the district and if Dibels was bought.

Dr. Roy said yes, it is an assessment that is nationally used.

Mr. Martins asked about the tests the district develops.

Dr. Roy explained they are MCAS release items and PARCC like items that are borrowed and they make their own.

Mr. Martins said he thought it was great to let them know which students are needing help. He asked what type of assistance is being provided.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that Fonseca is launching an after school program from 3-4:30 for students grades 3 through 5 two days a week in math and two days in ELA to be delivered by the Fonseca teachers after school based on how students are doing in the benchmark data. Letourneau is in the process of receiving a \$50K grant from DESE and that after school program will begin when students return from the holiday break in a similar way. It is all after school programming based on the data.

Mr. Martins asked if they considered that sufficient to help the students.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she thought it was a start and was a targeted intervention for students who need another dose of instruction.

Mr. Martins said he would be interested in knowing the assistance that the teacher has in the classroom for those that are high in the needs assistance category. He thought the data was good to know about but questioned what they are going to do with it. "Data for the sake of data is worthless unless you are going to do something about it." He thought additional programs after school time will help and would not know if it is sufficient until they try it. If they see this going on and on then that leads him to believe they need more help directly in the classroom.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that could be but she looks at Watson where the class sizes in 5<sup>th</sup> grade are around 18 students and they have the highest number of students in the warning category. She thinks it is a complex situation that requires more than one strategy. When looking at Watson, she thought it was also important to look at the number of students who are chronically absent as well. It is dependent upon each school and the context of that school.

Mr. Martins agreed that student teacher ratio is important but not the determining factor and other interventions may need to be used. He thought the material that was provided to them should also be passed on to the full Committee for discussion.

Mrs. Panchley asked if the after school sessions are targeted to the areas the students are having trouble in.

Dr. Roy said yes which is why the data is so important. She explained how some schools use the information and what interventions they might provide.

Mrs. Panchley said she recalls when they did the budget last year, it was explained that the interventions were fluid which is important for her to know that students are not being pulled for the year just because they were struggling with one unit.

Dr. Roy said that is happening in every building and noted that she was told that at Viveiros they really focused on the early literacy piece and the amount of kids in need of intervention went way down. That is their goal and every school is working towards that.

- Discussion of proposed Chapter 74 program(s) for application purposes

Mr. Robert Gadbois, Director of CVTE, said he wanted to update them on where they stand and some of the work they have accomplished so far. He then explained the process in coming up with their selection:

- They took a look at the entire list of possible Chapter 74 programs and eliminated any program that Diman and Durfee currently offer.
- They then took the list of remaining programs and identified from that list a list of neutral gender programs.
- They ended up with nine program choices. From that nine they took a look at areas that were grounded in STEM. He knows the Superintendent is interested in making sure they select a program that is STEM related.

- That brought them down to three possible choices: environmental science and technology, programming and web development, and robotics and automation technology.
- They then looked at occupational outlooks for those three areas and considered that they already had a program in the building related; their choice to bring forward is environmental science and technology.

Mr. Gadbois explained that they will be identifying schools that offer a program like this and visit those schools to see what the cost would be to put the program together. They will also look at the space and see what the costs associated would be with remediating the space. They have identified two sites in the vocational wing that would support the space requirements for the program. They are also looking, from the visits, to take a look at the equipment, materials, and supplies they would need and design on paper what the placement of the machines and products would look like within that space.

Mr. Martins said there are two types of programs in Chapter 74; programs like Durfee has (40% of students' time) and the programs at Diman (50% of students' time). He asked what time Mr. Gadbois was contemplating for the student in the environmental science program.

Mr. Gadbois said he was not following the question.

Dr. Michelle Sylvaria, Associate Principal, said she could respond. They had established that there is not a time requirement but was more about taking a look at the standards and being sure they could teach all of the standards within the three years of the pathway. That is what they will be doing as they move forward with the application.

Mr. Martins said that is true; however, they cannot meet the standards at one period a day. He thought they needed a minimum of 90 minutes of instruction per day. He asked if this particular program would be similar to the time spent in other programs such as culinary arts or cosmetology or will it be two classes during the school day (90 minutes).

Dr. Sylvaria said they will determine that as they analyze the standards and map it out over time.

Mr. Martins thought environmental science was a good selection and talked about CNC trainers for the program. He then asked how many students they were looking to enroll.

Mr. Gadbois said their goal is 20 students for the first year.

Mr. Martins asked about FRED-TV as another program. He believes there are courses already in place at Durfee and asked if it has been looked at.

Mr. Gadbois said they looked at several options but their feeling is that they would not like to disturb a program that is currently successful. They wanted to look at programs to expand their offerings at Durfee to bring in students that are not currently in the CVTE area.

Mr. Martins asked why he would say they don't want to disturb a program that is already successful. He did not feel there would be a disturbance and they could continue on exactly as it runs now. He mentioned other courses that could pair with the program to have it considered a Chapter 74 CVTE program. He was curious as to why this has not been explored.

Mr. Gadbois said it has been explored and they feel the program is very successful as it operates now and they do not want to disturb that. They feel the community would be better served if they offered a new program to bring in new students.

Mr. Marshall explained that they looked at the Chapter 74 programs and what wasn't being serviced in relation to the market. They are looking at environmental science because no one is offering it at this point and they have courses that loosely fit. The television program as it exists right now already meets the expectations in regards to exit points. They were trying to expand the offerings to give students more options and environmental science was one that seemed to fit and was also a good match between the Project Lead the Way programs and engineering track that they are trying to get up and running.

Mr. Martins said he understood that and their direction is okay. His concern and question is why they would pass up something that appears to be implementable. Right now the FRED-TV students are not considered as CVTE kids and are reported as regular ed. kids.

Mr. Marshall and Dr. Sylvaria said that was incorrect; they are reported as Perkins CVTE students.

Mr. Martins asked if they are receiving somewhere in the vicinity of \$12,000 for the students.

Mr. Marshall said no because the television program currently is not considered a Chapter 74 program but it is considered Perkins. They understand that the standards are pretty much the same but the television program as it stands right now is under Perkins umbrella and not Chapter 74.

Mr. Martins said that is where his greatest concern is because Perkins money is divided up according to the demographics of the area and is not a lot of money. Chapter 74 is a significant amount of money. He noted a regular ed. student is reimbursed at a rate around \$7,000 per student and a CVTE student is being reimbursed at \$12,000 per student. He acknowledged that there is a cost to a CVTE student but he has calculated in the past of it being approximately \$3,600 per student of additional Chapter 70 funds. If they are meeting all of the guidelines and requirements and if a student is enrolled in FRED-TV and an allied subject they would be receiving that additional money. He asked why they would not want to do that.

Mr. Marshall responded that it was not as simple as he describes. He noted that the courses are elective classes which means any student can take those classes. Under Chapter 74, they would be required to take the CVTE courses which would mean some students would not be able to take them because they would be part of a Chapter 74 program. He added that they can also only take a certain amount of students under Chapter 74 programs. Right now there is no requirement as to how many kids they can take into television because it is an elective course. They went into the process asking how they could service a larger number of kids and not from a financial standpoint. With environmental engineering, they do have students showing an interest because they do have elective courses.

Mr. Martins said the same thing could happen if a student decided in year two that they did not want to continue, they can go to something else.

Mr. Marshall said they can but if they look at the data, most students who enter the Chapter 74 programs stay. He believes that is because of the Durfee Discovery that was implemented.

Mr. Martins said he can appreciate and understands that there are students that are going to change their mind; however, the way the new process is with the time issues and meeting of the standards; if a student is in FRED-TV but not an allied program they are not a Chapter 74 student and vice versa.

Mrs. Panchley said they would not have space for those students.

Mr. Marshall said that is correct. They would have to have two studios and double the staff in order for one to be an elective.

Mr. Martins said they can only go to what they have. He asked how many they had in a class.

Mr. Marshall said it was around 25.

Mr. Martins said that is all they can fit in there but if five of them also took an allied class, those five could be considered a CVTE student. He commented that they were shaking their heads no.

Dr. Sylvania said she wanted to interject because Mr. Marshall mentioned the space and that was part of the feasibility study on which program to move forward with. They do have a very large space that was formerly used for aquaculture that they can plug right into for the environmental science program. They also currently have students in environmental science in Durfee Discovery because she started looking at this last year which will allow them to start their sophomore year. She feels good that they were charged with taking a look at one application and they seem to be making good progress with this and it seems to be coming together well. She felt they were going to be able to meet the April deadline for the application. Looking ahead to next year, they are open to exploring other programs such as the others that Mr. Gadbois mentioned (robotics and other STEM related programs).

Mr. Martins said he is pleased with having that program which will eventually bring in extra funding and will not change net school spending. He urged them to look at programs that can be done with minimal changes as far as structure is concerned. He also thought they should look at business programs. He mentioned that when looking at the one-year follow up studies, students who have taken a CVTE course graduate at a rate of 15-20% higher than a student that does not take any CVTE courses.

Mrs. Panchley said she appreciated their line of thinking on this and bringing in new programs for students. She would not want to preclude students currently taking FRED-TV from taking it if it was linked to an allied course. They charged them with coming back with one and it seems like they put a lot of effort into what the best fit was and she liked that they will be looking to add more in the future. She was happy with what they brought to them.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she wanted to update them on the budget rates for the types of students. Urban Superintendents presented the information from the Department of Education last Friday:

- Vocational students in the foundation budget are \$13,005 per pupil
- High school students are \$8,529
- Most Fall River students, because they are low income, have a low income allocation on top of that which is an additional \$3,400 (approximate)

When she combines that, the per pupil total for most Durfee students is \$11,296. When she subtracts that from them \$13,000 for a vocational student, the difference of \$1,600 per student.

Mr. Martins did not think they could do it totally in that capacity because of low income. He thought whether the student was in a CVTE program or not, low income is a separate category and coming in either way. They have to look at the regular ed. and at the cherry sheet categories. He noted it does cost the community around \$815 more for that student but they get more of a return on the CVTE student.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they get 80%; the community is not getting the \$13,000.

Mr. Martins said he has taken that into consideration and still comes out to about \$3,600.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that was because he was adding the low income.

Mr. Martins said he was not.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown thought they needed to get clarification on the numbers. They are also completing the follow-up studies and appreciate that students who are involved in CVTE classes graduate at higher rates and just as the Committee has been supportive of helping Durfee offer different types of programs, she thought it was worth noting that through the application process to CVTE programs, they are identifying a certain type of student in terms of attendance, conduct, grades, MCAS scores, etc. and taking students who do not struggle in school to be successful in those programs. She wants to continue to have the Committee take a look at how that is not going to be the best fit for all students or the only pathway to increasing the graduation rate because it is a certain type of student that is being accepted into those programs.

Mr. Martins said they need to have programs that are of student interest.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said to his point and the high school's point regarding FRED-TV that is serving that purpose. If they looked at the graduation rate of students who have participated in FRED-TV, she thought it would be pretty high because they are engaged. She felt it was more about finding engaging programs for students and tapping into their talents and interests. They want to pursue the Chapter 74 but she wants to be sure that is not the end all, be all. They have a large number of Durfee students who are struggling with attendance, conduct, etc. that will prevent them access to this.

Mr. Martins said he has made it clear and stated it each time the subject comes up that CVTE is not for everyone but for those that want it; if they can have them as Chapter 70 programs then they get additional monies (\$3,600).

Superintendent Mayo-Brown thought they needed to clarify the amount. They agreed to provide each other with the math.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said the Committee has been very supportive of Durfee as they are launching different types of programs to meet the needs of different types of students and she thought this was one for a particular group of students just as the Committee was supportive of Durfee Academy the week prior. It is the commitment of Durfee to personalize the educational experience for their students and she thought that is what they were seeing.

Mrs. Panchley said the AP students are also another spectrum that they want to make sure they are meeting their needs, too.

*At 5:34 PM, the administrators from Durfee left the meeting.*

- Discussion of district-based licensure programs for teachers of English Language Learners and Students with Special Needs

Ms. Kelly Cooney, Director of English Language Learners (ELL), and Ms. Ivone Medeiros, Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services, handed out documents.

Ms. Medeiros explained that her handout was around the challenges in obtaining a special education teacher's license. It is one of the most challenging to obtain and she wanted to give committee members an idea of what staff members are faced with when they hire someone on a waiver to obtain that license within that school year. The waiver expires on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the school year it is granted.

She explained the following:

- Most staff members that come in have a bachelor's degree
- Many have a bachelor's degree in other areas and are not licensed in that area (i.e. they may have a bachelor's in history and were not able to obtain their license to teach history so often times they are face with the preliminary track)
- For special education, it always involves additional course work and most of the course work is at least the equivalent of six graduate level courses and an internship on top of that. That is a challenge they are faced with in obtaining licensure. She noted that is for a moderate license and not for severe, deaf and hard of hearing, visual impairment, etc. Those requirements are more stringent.

She wanted to give committee members what staff members are challenged with in trying to obtain licensure and she knows they asked specifically around supporting staff and recruiting particularly around autism. There is no licensure in DESE for autism. The challenge in all districts – not just in autism but social emotional as well – is the skill set. They can have a license in special education but not necessarily the skill set to teach in that disability.

Mr. Martins said the issue of practicum he thought was something that could be easily implemented in the school system.

Ms. Medeiros said most people on waivers are doing their practicum in the position.

Mr. Martins said absolutely so, it is a supervised practicum.

Ms. Medeiros said that most that are hired are hired to a position. They are hired as a special educator under a waiver. They are in a position and are assigned a supervisor who meets the requirement to oversee them.

Mr. Martins did not think the practicum was a challenge.

Ms. Medeiros responded no; the challenge is the course work. They can take a competency review but under preliminary, there are about 20 competencies for special ed. under mild and moderate. That requires in each of those competencies at least 10 hours of professional development and most of that is done through graduate level course work. The challenge is getting the graduate level course work done in a year.

Mr. Martins said they can purchase courses from UMass Dartmouth.

Ms. Medeiros said UMass Dartmouth does not offer special education but Bridgewater did.

Mr. Martins said they could purchase courses from Bridgewater and if surrounding towns are having trouble – could get with them to chip in. He did not know if there was a contractual violation. He asked if they have to provide a means of no cost PD for teachers.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that is once they have their professional license.

Mr. Martins said if they are looking for something and can't get it then they have to provide an avenue to be able to develop it even if that means they pay for it and get other districts to get their teachers to go. If there are contractual obstacles, they have to be negotiated.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown did not think there were contractual obstacles. Ms. Medeiros did some of this when she coordinated and provided oversight for ELL certification. When they first started the recovery plan they had two ESL teachers and they had to build that up. Ms. Medeiros did what he is describing in partnering with Bridgewater State and then teachers left. What they are seeking from the Committee is what they want to do to ensure that the investment made in teachers stays in the district.

Mr. Martins said he agrees with that; however, they cannot tell a person they are committed.

Mrs. Panchley asked if they could.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they could have someone sign a letter of commitment but were having conversations about how legally enforceable that would be should the person leave. The fact that they sign the letter or memorandum of understanding might hold people.

Mr. Martins said that is fine but asked if it was better to do this or not have the employee. He said as one member of the School Committee, he would rather go this route and hopes those teachers would stay rather than have the class covered by a substitute.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she thinks that their experience is that they don't stay so questioned what they can do to get them to stay.

Ms. Medeiros gave an example with mentoring they did through Race to the Top where she tried to recruit people and only one came forward. That person got licensed, their master's degree, and mentoring and then they left for New Bedford. She got feedback from staff and distance was a factor in not wanting to participate.

Mr. Martins said when he got his master's he had to chase courses. He said they might leave which is a shame but thought it was better to try and hoped that some would stay than have the class covered by a substitute.

Ms. Medeiros said she is not debating that and is a product of Fall River and started as a substitute and went back to school for special education. When she looks at staff, one of the things they often do not tap into is their paraprofessionals who come with a lot of experience and are providing direct services all day to the kids. She would like to start looking at options for them. The biggest challenge a lot of times is that they do not have a bachelor's degree. She has reached out to Bridgewater and each course costs \$900 per participant without graduate level credit or books. She thought they needed some graduate level courses but also thought they needed options for the paraprofessionals.

Mr. Martins said she will receive his support for increasing the knowledge and skills of paraprofessionals in special education as well as his support for having courses teachers.

Ms. Medeiros said often times as paraprofessionals are getting their bachelor's; principals are hiring them as teachers. They come with a skill set, have experience, and have proven themselves. She explained some of the options they are trying to do with paraprofessionals to build their skill set; not just to get licensed but around autism, social-emotional. The Committee approved curriculum for their autism program, Rethink, which they will roll out in January which has 11 modules where staff members can go in and watch students and teachers in classrooms working around certain strategies. When they complete the 11 modules they get a certificate. It is a PD opportunity for paraprofessionals. The Committee also approved two positions for autism specialists last year; they have used them to do a lot of facilitation around PD. On early release days they have tackled the autism program differently based on feedback from staff. They meet as a group together with the paraprofessionals joining them.

She continued that they are also looking at options around the skill set around autism; they have chosen to use ABA as their methodology. The previous director had contracted out with Melmark to do some supervision hours for people who were interested in becoming BCBA's (Board Certified Behavior Analyst). Those people did not stay in Fall River once they obtained BCBA's. Right now they have a couple of BCBA's who can provide the supervision hours internally. Under that there are different options for paraprofessionals such behavior technicians. It is minimal work and only involves a high school diploma but involves 40 hours of additional work with a BCBA and often some PD. They are looking at different options on how to build the skill set for specific programs because licensure is not going to give the specific skill sets around the disabilities.

Mr. Martins said he wanted to give Mrs. Panchley an opportunity to speak.

Mrs. Panchley said she is just listening and learning because none of this has been spoken about in depth since she has been on the School Committee. She has seen peripheral reaction to teachers leaving and understands the problem but she did not understand how in depth it was. She did not have any questions.

Ms. Medeiros said for the position that has been a challenge for them to fill the past two years; the finalist candidate for that is a paraprofessional in Fall River who is completing a master's in special education and working with an autistic student one-on-one who was having a consult from the BCBA. They did a demo lesson and interviewed really well.

Mr. Martins said he hopes the individual stays. There are no guarantees. They have a problem retaining specialty type teachers. He thought they needed to have a very serious discussion in regards to why and if that needs to have contractual changes then they would have to deal with that. They want teachers who are certified. He asked about the behavioral certification.

Ms. Medeiros said there is a national board certification; not a DESE certification.

Mr. Martins agreed but thought it would be nice to obtain.

Ms. Medeiros said they have teachers in their autism program who are special ed. teachers and BCBA's.

Mr. Martins said these are issues they have to resolve. They have a legal requirement to provide the special needs service and if they do not, they have a legal issue they are faced with. Everyone is entitled

to a fair and appropriate education and he understands about money but it is not an excuse to not provide the service.

Ms. Medeiros said she thought the Committee has been very generous in Fall River in supporting special education and English Language Learners.

Mr. Martins said he subscribes to Rights Law and gets a lot of information from it. One of the things is that schools cannot use finances as a means of not providing the service. If they are having difficulty in obtaining the teachers then how can they provide the service? They have to do something to retain the teachers. They have to determine what that is and make it work. They cannot have classrooms empty with substitutes who are not qualified to be there.

Ms. Medeiros agreed.

Mrs. Panchley said she agreed with what he is saying and would like to explore some kind of agreement if training is provided that they stay for a certain amount of time. She is in support of looking at the contracts to see if there is a way to support it in that way.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked Ms. Medeiros to describe the example she gave to her recently.

Ms. Medeiros said one of the challenges particularly in the social emotional program is getting male paraprofessionals. They had recruited hard and gotten a really good male paraprofessional for one of their social emotional classrooms and he resigned suddenly. She had the principal speak to him and he indicated he had been hired by New Bedford with a \$6.00 per hour pay increase and payment for courses he needed to take. He was still going to be a paraprofessional in New Bedford but they have tiers. It is a challenge for them and it is harder for her to recruit paraprofessionals to some degree than teachers.

Mr. Martins said many industries have tuition reimbursement programs with no guarantees that the person is going to stay. If that is what is needed; it is a legal requirement they have to fulfill it. He asked if there were any other questions.

Mrs. Panchley asked if they were going to hear about ELL or if it was all the same.

Dr. Roy said it is a very similar situation. They are having a hard time recruiting ESL staff. They currently have about 800 limited English proficient students in the district and the number is growing. The recruitment of licensed ESL staff is an issue. It is complicated by the fact that UMass Dartmouth does not offer a program or a program teachers are coming out of licensed. They are proposing a similar ESL in-house licensure pathway that Ms. Cooney outlined in her handout.

Ms. Cooney explained there are a couple of different pathways to licensure but they are looking mostly at teachers who have an initial license. For teachers who hold an initial license in another field, they need to pass the ESL MTEL and go through a 150 hour internship. The State has not given specific regulations about the internship but they have given specific regulations about the competencies on the test. She looked into a program through the Boston Public Schools and it is similar to the one they are proposing. They also looked at if there were students getting graduate degrees in education from Harvard or Fitchburg, if they want to tack on the additional ESL license. Before they could just take an extra test; now, even if you are in grad school you need to pass the MTEL and do a 150 hour internship. The reason is that ESL is a really specialized field and the reason students are getting stuck at level 3 in

Massachusetts and in the country is that a lot of school systems are still teaching them like regular ed. students as opposed to ESL teachers having the expertise and applied linguistics. There is another body of expertise that ESL teachers need to have to do the targeted work.

Dr. Roy said the course work (150 hours) proposed is to give the content knowledge that they cannot find a good program for. The question for the Committee is that Ms. Cooney has been in contact with Bridgewater and they could support 60 of the hours/6 graduate credits but it would be \$900 per participant. It could be run in-house if the partnership does not work out but the cost would be basically the same. Either of the options should give them the knowledge needed to help them to get certified and build their skill set. She questioned who would pay the \$900 and if there should be a letter of commitment to FRPS.

Mrs. Panchley asked if they have relationships with other school systems that are doing this.

Ms. Cooney said she talked to the man who developed the program for the Boston Public Schools and now works for them. If they did it in house, they would add in things the district needs.

Mrs. Panchley said she meant, for instance, Brockton or other urban districts that may be having trouble with the same population. Are they paying; are there commitment letters? What is common practice?

Ms. Cooney said there is a commitment letter in Boston. She was not sure about New Bedford but they are paying for the class. Usually the letter states if they leave it has to be because they moved 50 miles or more away and they are forgive. If not, there is a commitment but she does not know if it has ever been held accountable. Boston Teachers Residency and Teach for America never hold them accountable but there is an understanding when they commit that they fulfill the amount of time.

Ms. Medeiros said Brockton is a little bit different; as part of their contract they can only hire people that are licensed; they will not go for a waiver.

Mr. Martins said he has been critical of the use of grant funds but felt they had to search for funding for this. He noted every grant has allowable usage and asked if it could be used for something like this. He said when their back is up against the wall, they have to do something. They cannot have classrooms that are filled with a substitute day after day. If they are having difficulty, they have to grow their own somehow. If it is allowable under the terms of usage in the grants, he is all for it.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they do not disagree with him and everyone wants to make sure they have qualified, effective teachers in every classroom across the district but they are at the point now with the Committee in terms of looking for direction. Would they like them to budget for paying for courses or pursue the option of finding out if there is a binding letter of agreement that can be drafted? In concept and theory they are all on the same page. They want to move forward with it and are looking for direction from the Committee.

Mr. Martins said they will have his support on that as long as they also include in the list the grant funding allowable usage category because they cannot continue down the avenue which they are going.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked if there were incentives the Committee would like to consider to retain teachers. Fall River has the lowest adjusted teacher salary across any urban district. She noted it didn't look that way on DESE's website because ELT was included in the average.

Mr. Martins said he would like to see the surrounding communities (not Lowell and Springfield) such as Greater Fall River including Dartmouth, New Bedford, Fairhaven and what their salaries are for teachers (standard). They have to stay within the market if they are losing faculty because they are going 10 miles to New Bedford and getting paid more and having courses paid for.

Ms. Medeiros said they are also losing them to SouthCoast Collaborative and private schools like the residential schools that pay paraprofessionals more than Fall River.

Mrs. Panchley said she was getting nervous because they were talking about paraprofessionals, teachers, and training. She thought they needed to get realistic and prioritize where they will get the most bang for their buck because they cannot do it all.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she was pulling up salaries and the adjusted average teacher salary for Fall River without ELT is \$47,800; New Bedford's is \$67,600.

Mr. Martins asked if that was the same step.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said no, it was just the adjusted average teacher's salary. She noted some of it speaks to a younger work force but they hear anecdotally that teachers are leaving for higher salaries. As they think about their shortage areas in ESL and special education, the Committee may want to consider a different approach for those areas which would be a whole other collective bargaining issue. She thinks they need to understand why teachers are leaving – working conditions, case load, salary, not feeling supported in their roles, etc.

Mr. Martins said absolutely, they have to look at all of it.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she thought they could chunk it out for the Committee in terms of PD, further training, creating a pathway for paraprofessionals to licensure, and a pathway for teachers who are already licensed to go into special education or ESL. They just needed some direction.

Mrs. Panchley thought that made sense and asked if they needed a motion or if they would just get back to them with more information.

Mr. Martins did not think a motion was needed. They could get the information, share it with the subcommittee, and they could make a motion at that point to send it to the Committee as a Whole for further discussion.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown reviewed again what they would categorize along with the budget implications for each and potential grants that may cover the expenses.

Mrs. Panchley asked that they also look into a sample letter from another district.

Mr. Martins asked for a copy of the salary schedules from various districts so he can compare steps.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they are all online now with DESE and they could get those to him.

There was no further discussion

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<b>MOTION: Mrs. Panchley – Mr. Martins: To adjourn.</b>		
<b>All in favor</b>	<b>None Opposed</b>	<b>Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15 PM</b>

Respectfully submitted,



Administrative Assistant for  
School Committee Services

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Interim Administrative Assistant for School Committee Services.