

## **Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

November 18, 2014

Present: Diane Lyons, Mark Fleischauer, Deirdre Burns, Joe Phelan, Tom Burnell, Steve Jensen, Steve Jenkins (parent and community member)

The agenda for the meeting was discussion of the financial impact of implementing the District's technology plan. Tom distributed copies of Steve Jensen's technology presentation to the BOE last April as well as a spreadsheet he and Steve developed with the five year outlook for the "Estimated Technology Budget Initial Implementation."

The infrastructure work started over the summer is essentially complete. Some fine tuning has been needed to work out range issues. Needed another server and Steve Jensen was able to secure one.

The District has about 70 Smartboards and some are failing. It is not cost effective to repair them. Smartboards have many points of failure and Steve is looking at simpler technologies i.e., interactive projectors. Some Smartboards are still in good shape. This budget item will be determined through consultation with teachers about how they use the technology and what their needs are.

The 5 year plan calls for a 1-1 model K-12, that is, each student has his/her own device. There are no plans right now to allow students to take the devices home. Questions about how devices are managed in middle and high school where students change classes have yet to be worked out.

Currently, at CLS every grade level and the library has a cart with iPad Air (K-2) or MacBook Air (3-5). Each K-5 teacher has been provided with a device. Carts are just now being deployed. Steve shared that the process for determining devices was made in discussion with grade level teachers about their needs. The committee noted that historically the District has approached the use of technology on an "opt in" basis, with staff using it to their level of interest and ability. Tom has included in-service training as part of the multiyear tech plan budget. Steve emphasized that it is the District's approach that curriculum drives technology use and his assessment is that many staff are eager to use new hardware and software in their classrooms. It was agreed upon that Steve will make a presentation to the BOE in late Jan/early Feb about whether and how the devices are being used at CLS.

Tom estimates that the total budget for implementation of a 1-1 model over five years is 1.5-1.7 million dollars. The multiyear budget presented at the meeting is based on a three year lease purchase through BOCES. The model is a 3 year lease purchase, 5 year replacement of devices. Tom suggested that he will also provide the committee with models based on 4 year and 5 year lease purchase to flatten out the yearly impact to the District's budget. Tom also alerted the committee to timing issues related to BOCES and State approval of lease purchase. By the time the process is complete, hardware is not available to teachers until late summer or after the start of school. The

Board may want to consider authorizing any lease purchase agreement before the budget vote to get the process moving. He will look into if/when/consequences of pulling back from an authorization should the budget fail.

The committee expressed concern about the costs of the plan. Tom noted increased, and unexpected, Special Education costs which will have an impact on our 2015-16 budgeting. It was noted that many variables, including students moving into or out of the District, can have budget effects that can be unpredictable. Out of school placements have doubled this year. At the same time, we will be seeing much slower growth in TRS and ERS contributions for 2015-16. All agreed that the tax cap makes implementation of a robust technology plan more challenging.

The committee discussed the need to consider 1) alternative funding sources and 2) revisions to the tech plan itself. Joe noted the importance of balancing curricular goals with available resources. Examining possible adjustments to the tech plan and various options for funding is essential.

Possible sources of revenue may include:

- a. SMART monies - the recently based state bond referendum. At this time the District has received no word on how much RCSD might get and what the parameters are for use of the monies.
- b. As noted previously, look at spreading the lease purchase over more years.
- c. Exceed the tax cap and go for a 60% budget approval in May.
- d. Our own bond referendum. With a local referendum, we can get a clear picture of whether the community supports this initiative without jeopardizing the whole budget going down. It was noted, however, that we also have facilities needs that are being considered for a referendum.
- e. Continuing to seek support form the Rhinebeck Science Foundation.
- f. Speaking to legislators about grant money - some of which has been made available in past years.

The committee also discussed examining alterations to the tech plan. Are we ready for 1-1? Do we need to rescale the plan, stretching it out over more years? What are our minimum needs? A cart at every grade level? What would an alternative plan look like? Can we continue to move forward on meeting technology needs but with a more flexible plan? The committee requested that Steve Jensen develop alternative models that we can begin to consider at our next meeting.

For our next meeting: Tom will refine the tech budget estimates overall. Also will provide numbers for 4 and 5 year lease purchase. Steve will develop ideas for a "plan B," if the 1-1 model is determined to put too high a financial burden on the District.

Next meeting:

December 16, 2014 at noon. Agenda will include the above as well as examination of fund balance projections.

Submitted by Deirdre Burns