

## Special Meeting and Public Budget Hearing Minutes February 27, 2017 Horace W. Porter School Cafeteria

**Board Members Present:** Christopher Lent-Chairman, James Chakulski, David Crim, Kathy Tolsdorf- Vice Chairman, Lisa Napolitano, Linette Dooley

**Board Members Absent:** Karin Vertefeuille

**Others Present:** Lol Fearon-Superintendent, Barbara Wilson-Director of Student Services, Craig Huntington, Beverly Ciurylo-Finance Director-Town of Columbia, and Jennifer Tigeleiro

- I. **Call to Order** - Chairman Christopher Lent called the special meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Audience of Citizens**  
Time allotted for public participation is twenty (20) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes.

C. Lent asked for comments, questions or concerns from the audience.

No comments were received.

- IV. **2017/2018 Budget Presentation & Discussion – Mr. Lol Fearon, Columbia Superintendent**  
Superintendent L. Fearon provided a PowerPoint presentation describing the 2017/2018 Board of Education budget. He noted the budget has been shared electronically with families through SchoolMessenger by text and email as well as posted on the District Website. The overall budget request of \$12,734,368 for 2017/2018 is a net increase of 1.34% or \$168,571. Areas of budgetary change from 2016/17 to 2017/18 include a slight reduction in anticipated high school costs (-1.14%) and an increase in PreK- 8 costs of 2.86%. Some of the cost increases are attributable to salaries, employee medical benefits, workers compensation and an increase in supplies.

Proposed changes from the 2016/2017 budget include the increase of a half time technology position to full time position. PreK is expanding to one full day class in an effort to offer services to students who may need them. This expanded program has the potential for cost savings in the future by reducing the need for extended services and special needs placements. Half day preschool classes will also continue to be offered. This change does not impact staffing.

A reduction of one paraeducator due to a student graduating from H.W. Porter is included in the budget.

Areas of focus for the 2017-2018 budget are long range planning, maintaining and improving current programs and improving student success. A commitment to class size at the primary grades, co-teaching, and integration of technology and improvement of the PreK program are reflected in those efforts.

Additional increases driving the budget include tuition of high school and magnet school students, software, textbooks and equipment.

Areas of reduction include unemployment costs, professional services, pupil transportation and tuition mainly relating to special education placement changes.

An anticipated tuition increase of 6% for magnet school students has been budgeted. There are 46 tuition magnet students projected for 2017/18 at this time. Five students attend magnet programs which are not Town funded. Magnet school costs represent 1.85% of the total budget.

Enrollment projections for H.W. Porter for 2017/2018 are 412 students and 260 students in grades 9-12. The projections are very close to the projections estimated in the demographic study completed in December 2016.

**V. 2017/2018 Public Budget Input**

Chairman C. Lent asked if any audience members had questions or concerns.

No comments were received.

Board members reviewed the budget. . They are in agreement that it is a responsible budget that reflects our current needs.

**VI. Adjournment**

L. Napolitano MOVED, L. Dooley SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Tolsdorf,  
Secretary/ Vice Chairperson