



HOLLISTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the School Committee
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Bradford L. Jackson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Date: March 16, 2020

To: Stacey Raffi, Chair, Holliston School Committee
Anne Louise Hanstad, Chair, Budget Subcommittee

From: Bradford L. Jackson, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

RE: FY20 Financial Concerns Related to State-wide School Closure

This memorandum is being developed in response to a request from Budget Subcommittee Chair, Ms. Hanstad, to provide an initial assessment of the potential FY20 financial concerns related to the Gubernatorial order to close schools in Massachusetts during the initial phases of the Coronavirus outbreak. I can't emphasize enough that this situation is extremely fluid and changing almost hourly (I wish I had a dime for every time I've written that in the past week), and is intended to ONLY serve as my initial thoughts in this area. Please remember that, until less than 24-hours ago, we were in the midst of planning a one-week closure that has now been extended to 3-weeks, at a minimum.

With those caveats firmly in place, I offer my initial thinking around three particular concerns that have already arisen:

- **Planning continuity of learning efforts** – As Principals and Central Office administrators ask teachers to prepare on-going learning activities, we are challenged by a lack of Chromebooks available to distribute to students in grades 3-5. While our 1:1 Chromebook initiative in Grades 6-12 puts us in a very good position at the secondary level, teachers from all 3 grades at Miller want to design lessons and activities that will require 1:1 technology access. Miller is currently equipped with a 2:1 capability, leaving us short on Chromebooks. Between spares and 2 Chromebook carts available to break down and distribute and a generous donation of 100 Chromebooks from a local private foundation (50 of which were already accepted by the SC; and a new offer for 50 additional received over the weekend) we can cobble together enough Chromebooks to distribute to Miller students. However, we need 25 fully functional Chromebooks for faculty use to allow enough capacity to offer a high-quality on-line learning environment to our students. Finally, we need Chromebook management software for all of the donated equipment plus the new Chromebooks needed for faculty:
 - 25 Chromebooks @ \$220/unit = \$5,500
 - 125 units – Chromebook Management Software @ \$30/unit = \$3,750
 - Total need - \$9,250
- **Paying hourly staff** – All of the hourly staff can continue to be paid through the shutdown as funds are set aside in the FY20 budget for that purpose. There are two exceptions to this: our hourly Cafeteria workers and our hourly Extended Day staff, as both of those sets of employees are paid through revolving funds. With school closed, there is no revenue coming into either the Cafeteria or the Extended Day program, leaving a gap that would need to be filled. We estimate the cost of continuing to pay the hourly employees who are paid through revolving accounts to be as follows:

- Extended Day Program - \$14,690.74/week = \$44,072.22 for shutdown period.
 - Food Service Program - \$7,322.68/week = \$21,968.04 for shutdown period.
 - Total Need = \$66,040.26 for shutdown period.
- **Food Service Losses** – Faced with an unanticipated 3-week shutdown, the Holliston Food Service Department donated approximately \$325 of perishable foods to the Holliston Food Pantry, so this food would not be wasted. In addition, the Holliston Public Schools is partnering with other local charitable organizations to provide “grab-and-go” lunches to families in need. The Federal government has ordered school districts with a free and reduced lunch population that exceeds 50% to continue to feed those students and promised to make the districts financially whole. No such Federal promise has been extended to districts like Holliston where our participation rate in this federal program does not approach the cut-off. We estimate the cost per lunch to be in the \$2.00 per lunch range. If 100 lunches are needed daily, that's 500/week or 1500 for the entire 3 week period. (Total potential cost = \$3,000). We do NOT know the extent of the charitable organizations' financial contribution at this time. The lunches will be prepared in the Miller kitchen which will undergo a \$500 sanitizing process tomorrow before the program commences on Wednesday.
 - Estimated maximum cost = \$3,500

Summary Estimate:

Chromebooks/software -	\$9,250.00
Hourly Employees	\$66,040.26
Food Service Losses	<u>\$3,500.00</u>
Total potential	\$78,790.26

As I offer these three current areas of concern, I want to reiterate that this list is preliminary and assumes that the School Committee will support my recommendation to continue to pay all hourly employees included in the FY20 budget through the appropriation. I appreciate the opportunity to identify these initial areas of concern to assist the financial leadership of the community with their planning efforts to support the essential functions of local government during this time when our citizens are relying the most on us for that support.

CC: Keith Buday, Business Manager