



**Burley Local School Council Meeting Minutes  
May 18, 2020**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm.

**Roll Call:**

**Present:** Catherine Plocher, Mary Renouard, Amy Walsh, Carolyn Skibba, Rebecca Armatis-Furr, Bob Blitstein, Teresa Merritt, Blanca Fernandez, Rob Moon, Stephen Soltanzadeh, Liz Wiedegreen, Laurie Barry

**Approval of Minutes:**

The Council reviewed the April 2020 LSC minutes. Blanca Fernandez motioned to approve the minutes. Amy Walsh seconded. All voted in favor.

**Principal Report:**

Ms. Plocher presented the 2020 - 2021 budget to the LSC. She explained which positions are paid for by CPS outside of our school budget versus the Burley school budget.

Blue indicates positions paid for by CPS outside of Burley budget

Black indicates positions paid for by Burley school budget

1 Principal

1 Assistant Principal

1 Clerk

1 Security

20 General Education Teachers (19 + 1)

.5 Reading Specialist/Interventionist

1 Art Teacher

1 Physical Education Teacher

1 STEAM Teacher

1 Technology Teacher

1 Technology Coordinator Assistant

6 Special Education Teachers

5 Special Education Teacher Assistants

1 Counselor

2 Lunch Staff

1 Shared Engineer



### 3 Custodians

Shared Clinicians (Social Worker, Psychologist, OT, Nurse, Speech)

CPS has reduced one Special Education teaching assistant position. Due to Burley's enrollment, legally we should be allocated 7 Special Ed teachers. CPS came back and said we can have 5. Ms. Plocher and Ms. Nash worked very hard with the appeal office presenting the case for Burley's diverse learners. Fifteen minutes before the LSC meeting, Ms. Plocher received an email saying we can have 6 Special Education teachers. In the email there was no explanation why CPS can not provide a 7th Special Ed teacher at this point. These numbers are also assuming we don't receive any more Special Ed students in the fall which is unlikely.

**CPS Budget Allocation Total: \$2,858,189 (excluding FOB)**

### **Student Based Budget - SBB (115)**

Allocation: \$2,711,569

Staffing (salary + benefits) - \$2,702,366

#### Personnel Buckets

Teacher extended day - \$1,000

Teacher sub coverage for professional development - \$1,000

Clerk extended day - \$1,000

(\$226 benefit adjustment)

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Total: \$3,226

#### Non-personnel buckets

Copier contracts - \$1,000

Health contracts - \$1,000

Teacher professional development seminars - \$500

Furniture - \$700

Equipment - \$700

Supplies - \$677

Instructional materials - \$700

Technology - \$700

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Total: \$5,977



### **Supplemental General State Aid - SGSA (115)**

Allocation: \$66,620

Staffing (salary + benefits) - \$66,418 (decreased about \$12K from last year)

#### Non-personnel buckets

Supplies - \$202

### **Title II Supplementary (353)**

Allocation: \$80,000

Staffing (salary + benefits) - \$79,577

Contingency - \$423

### **Discretionary Funding (124) - FOB**

Staffing (salary + benefits) - approximately \$200

Friends of Burley (FOB) has had to cover baseline staffing in the past - one Specials teacher and a halftime reading position which provides intensive reading instruction. This leaves a little over \$9,100 outside of staffing for the school budget. This is similar to budgets from the last couple years.

Ms. Plocher shared how Burley relies on grants, donations, cell tower money, etc. - everything helps with the budget. These numbers are not based on the 10th day - we may receive an increase of money based on enrollment on the 10th day of school next year.

Ms. Plocher said to her knowledge this is the first time we have a discrepancy with Special Ed position allocation and it would be the first time that we've gone into the school year without enough Special Ed teachers.

She does not see how CPS can service our minutes without a 7th Special Ed teacher as we are allocated quota positions based on the number of minutes our diverse learners need.



Ms. Plocher did not include a position for a third 2nd grade teacher because there's no guarantee there will be three Kindergarten classes. Those numbers are based on Kindergarten registration, but that's been put on hold due to shelter-in-place. The numbers may show there's only enough for two full Kindergarten classrooms so if numbers in other grades don't change and families don't move in/out of the boundaries, Burley would maintain three 1st grade classes, three second grade classes, but possibly two kindergartens.

The Special Ed position is allocated through the Office of Diverse Learners and Support. General ed positions are allocated through CPS budget department.

A teacher representative council member shared that it will be incredibly hard going into the school year knowing we're down one Special Ed teacher. She shared with the council that she doesn't know how we can accept a budget like this already being down one teacher. She mentioned it's even harder to hire throughout the year as that's not a quick process.

Another teacher representative from the council shared that "year after year after year CPS doesn't meet our basic staffing needs and that this decision by CPS is not legally defensible. It's troubling that the position allocation not only would make it so kids will not get what they need but the school and District would put us in a position that is a violation of student rights." Council members felt there should be "no wiggle room for CPS shortcomings."

A teacher council member shared that CPS used to be on quotas, but when they shifted to student based budgeting, it breaks down the cost of individual positions.

There was lots of "concern about approving a budget and knowing that this isn't right for our students or legal." There was also concern on "how does it affect Ms. Plocher and her budget if we vote no on approving the budget as it currently stands."

Ms. Plocher wasn't sure. In 10 years Ms. Plocher has never not had a budget approved.

Ms. Plocher clarified for the council that the PTA only funds social events. The majority of fundraising goes back to school events like the Ice Cream Social, Fall Fun Fair, etc. PTA provides minimal funding to support the school. 99% of outside funding comes from FOB. All those donations fund everything from books to positions, Merit Music program, etc. Mrs. Plocher pointed out Burley was fortunate to already host our winter party before the pandemic. 40 - 60% of our income from that night comes from sign up events, many will be cancelled or rescheduled.



Burley will not be able to rely on the walk-a-thon, Explore More, Grandparents day, etc. to close the gap in funding. We don't have a surplus; FOB budget is pretty tight. The annual fund is still open. FOB is about \$60K short of FOB goal to cover expenses this year.

A council member asked about ESL funding. Ms. Plocher said due to our enrollment numbers we do not fall into the state formula to receive position funding for ESL students.

One council member suggested approving the budget citing that this is a Special Ed issue that the Office of Diverse Learners needs to resolve.

Other council members felt this was "unconscionable that we are faced with this" and a protest vote would send a sign to the District.

Everyone on the LSC recognized that by declining the budget "this is in no way a repudiation of Ms. Plocher's allocation of funds or a reflection of her work. This is illegal. Holistically it's not acceptable to offer less positions than are legally required."

Some council members pondered whether Ms. Plocher's boss will be asking why her LSC didn't approve the budget. The council would encourage Ms. Plocher to respond that "we approve everything you've laid out for us, but what they're doing by denying this position is violating the law and opens up the system to a lawsuit and denying kids the services they need."

Ms Plocher reminded everyone she received this email after 5:30pm tonight, the LSC meeting started at 6pm and of course she will keep advocating. CPS didn't provide reasons for why they went to 6 teachers, not 7.

Another council member said, "we believe it's the moral and legal responsibility to equally educate each child that comes to the school door, we can't do that if we are not complying with the law."

Ms. Skibba moved to reject the current budget allocation on the grounds that it doesn't meet legal and educational obligations we have to the special education students of Burley. All voted yes. (Ms. Plocher abstained from voting) Motion is approved.

#### **Financial Report:**

Ms. Plocher received word that the last day to spend this year's budget is this Friday, May 22 then the District is locking budgets and taking back funds.

Ms. Plocher proposed



\$4706.80 from 115 math instruction material line to supply line (for grad items)

\$2200 from 115 reading instructional material line to tech subscription line (Seesaw)

\$2500 from internal accounts to budget to pay for Dancing with Class grant

Liz Wiedegreen motioned to move to vote. Teresa Merrit seconded. All voted in favor. Budget transfers are approved.

### **Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP):**

Ms. Plocher reported they are working on the CIWP. There are about 12 members on the committee working diligently meeting regularly for the next two years. They are wrapping up self evaluation and shifting to strategies and priorities. The committee is making good progress and working hard to present to the LSC in a timely fashion.

### **Chair Report:**

Stephen Soltanzadeh reported the next LSC meeting is Wednesday, June 10.

The principal evaluation will be emailed out shortly.

There has been no word from the Office of LSC on the elections for next year. They are still on hold due to not bringing people in to the building to vote.

### **Public Comment**

A parent of a diverse learner student thanked the LSC for standing up and using their voting power to make a statement that violating the law is not appropriate. She is part of the ODLSS parent advisory council - and has met with some District staff members. It's conflicting with what they're saying at these meetings with how they are allocating these appeals that they would not cut the minutes if they did not justify. She wanted to thank the LSC for putting ourselves on the line.

Another parent wanted to thank the LSC for their presentation, but presented a concern about the district's 4th quarter grading determinations and policy. She doesn't think it's fair because if you're using that to grade the children moving forward, she felt it's not transparent and not fair to the kids. Ms. Plocher thoroughly explained the 4th quarter grading by the District which came about with collaboration of the state of IL and CTU. Burley received a manual that breaks down criteria we are all bound to. The District is a large body with various situations. The District has determined students will not receive any lower grades from when they left the school in the 3rd quarter. They will earn the



same grade or higher. For example, if a student was receiving a B, and was supposed to be a C, the student receives a pass instead. It will be a cumulative grade averaged by 1st, 2nd, 3rd quarters. The only time a student will receive an incomplete is if the student is not engaging in learning. Then the student will receive an incomplete and be prioritized for summer school. Ms. Plocher does not have the authority to change the District policy. There is no penalty for submitting work late and students can redo their work. Teachers also maintain 2 hours of office everyday if students need more assistance.

Ms. Plocher has not received any indication of what school will look like in the fall. There was a brief internal meeting planning for every scenario; 100% remote, back to normal, could be some sort of hybrid, etc.

Ms. Plocher gave kudos to the teachers and staff for making remote learning happen and engaging. A council member complimented the Burley staff that they are doing an amazing job and are grateful to have another month of school left.

**Closing of meeting:**

Laurie Barry motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm. Blanca Fernandez seconded. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned.

**Next Meeting:**

Next meeting will be Wednesday, June 10.