

SIAM Meeting Minutes January 19, 2010

In Attendance/Signed-in: Mary Cringan, Karen Baer, Michelle Sciabarrasi, Liam Shanahan, Denise Adams, Cathy Dickson, Kate Narita, Toni Spacciapoli, Terry Cote, Ingrid Holmes, Kerry Hacket, Andrew Hacket, Christina Mammone, Kerry Williams.

There were additional members of the audience who joined the meeting as well.

The 1/19/10 meeting was a combined SIAM and PTA meeting with Superintendent Dr. Thomas Pandiscio as the guest. He has attended school council meetings in all towns to discuss the budget.

Dr. Pandiscio compared and contrasted this year's budget process with last year. Last year's process was unprecedented relative to the intensity of cuts and the rapid pace with no forewarning. A handout tracked the local aid estimates for FY2010. He noted this year there is agreement on revenues between the House, Senate, and Administration, and that they have gone up.

The Governor's budget is expected to be released by the end of January, yet schools have no indication of what it will look like.

The first draft of Projected FY11 revenues was viewed and discussed. The foundation assessment is critical and not likely to go up.

Dr. Pandiscio handed out a chart outlining the salary concessions made last year by employees that helped meet the \$2.3 million deficit, yet he was clear that he would not expect that again this year.

Last year 18.5 teachers were cut. If cuts are necessary this year, he hopes to absorb them through attrition/retirement so unemployment costs are not involved. (If two teachers are cut, one more cut is necessary to fund 52 weeks of unemployment.)

Priorities as he approaches the member towns regarding the budget are to keep as much as possible intact and the work with employee groups for equitable wage adjustment. The District will be joining the GIC (Government Insurance Commission) for health insurance which bring approximately a \$1.3 million saving to the district. A retirement incentive has also been offered with the potential to net savings.

New predictions by NESDEC have just been released. The birthrate is low in Princeton and next year's kindergarten enrollment is expected to be 23, and only 24 the following year. Predictions have been accurate.

The Task Force is addressing declining enrollments by attracting students to TPS through school choice. Current goals involve creating a brochure for distribution and conducting a survey in conjunction with SIAM. Numbers must be carefully monitored. The town must look at maintaining TPS as the enrollment numbers drop. The Superintendent mentioned last year's attempt to change the regional agreement to allow bussing across town lines was not supported.

Dr. Pandiscio answered questions at the end of the meeting.

Next Meeting: March 2, 2010 at 3:30 pm.