

BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
PUBLIC 2008 - 2009 BUDGET WORKSHOP #2

MARCH 5, 2008

The second Public 2008-2009 Budget Workshop of the Board of School Directors of the Bethlehem Area School District was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2008 beginning at 6:00 p.m., in the Auditorium of East Hills Middle School, 2005 Chester Road, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Members present: Directors Amato, Cann, Craig, Dexter, Follweiler, Haytmanek, Koch, McKeon, and Leeson - 9.

MEMBERS
PRESENT

Others present: Dr. Joseph A. Lewis, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Robert Gross, Associate Superintendent; administrators, members of the press, and other interested citizens and staff members.

OTHERS
PRESENT

President Leeson stated that they would use the same basic format, which they used for the last meeting, considering they had approximately the same number of people in attendance.

DISCUSSION
FORMAT

President Leeson asked if there were any comments or questions based on the information from the last meeting. Seeing none, she asked Dr. Lewis to present the first topic of discussion.

Dr. Lewis stated that Mrs. Katona was going to review cuts in the Curriculum and Instruction Division, having her full staff present along with Dr. Donaher, who would address related areas to the budget, primarily in athletics and other ancillary departments.

CURRICULUM
AND
INSTRUCTION –
REVIEW OF
REDUCTIONS

Mrs. Katona stated that after taking time to review the budget, they had modified it somewhat from what they were originally considering. She expressed that it was very difficult to find areas which she could justify eliminating and attempted to look at the budget cuts in such a way that they wouldn't have to wipe out any single area which was critical to student success. With consideration of the No Child Left Behind requirements and their efforts to move the district off of corrective action status, they carefully considered where they could cut back and still meet very rigorous demands. Her challenge became how to balance their needs to provide a well-rounded curriculum, while also giving the necessary focus to PSSA achievement and allow students to thrive on extracurricular activities. Needless to say, it was not an easy task. Mrs. Katona stated that they would notice that when they added the red and black items in each column, the total cuts go beyond the two, four, six, eight or ten percent designations. She noted that as Dr. Lewis had explained a few weeks ago, the cuts identified in red were her initial suggestions for consideration and the total of the ones at the bottom were slightly more than ten percent.

The items in black would only be considered if absolutely necessary after viewing the budget in its entirety. She said she would go through the specific Curriculum and Instruction items first and then ask Dr. Donaher to explain the recommended cuts in athletics and intramurals.

Mrs. Katona noted that in the two and four percent columns, all of the items were in red. The two, \$5,000 amounts in the first column reference cuts from her budget in supplies designated for Career Academy and for the Curriculum and Instruction Department. In reviewing those areas with Mr. Majewski, it appeared there were costs associated with the start-up of the academy, which no longer need to be replenished, such as software. Based on the examination of spending patterns for both the Career Academy and C & I, they determined that they could comfortably adjust \$5,000 in those areas while still being able to maintain the programs. The much larger amount in that column, \$190,000, showed the savings recognized as a result of moving RASA back to the Rosemont building and ending the lease on St. Cyril and Methodius School and she noted that Mr. Majewski had discussed that previously.

Mrs. Katona noted \$20,000 cut from testing in the four percent column, which was in part, a result of re-examining the actual expenditures from 2006-2007 and the recognition of alternative funding sources which assist in covering the costs in the area.

Dr. Lewis asked Mrs. Katona to elaborate on testing and noted that they were not doing as much in-house testing because the data and information received from 4SIGHT replaced it.

DR. LEWIS –
INTRODUCTION
OF BUDGET

Mrs. Katona continued that perhaps some tests had been given for some time, but they had outlived their usefulness and with the 4SIGHT and PSSA areas, they were obviously gathering more data and coming up with common finals.

Mrs. Katona noted the proposed \$125,000 reduction in summer school. She reviewed that summer school at the high school level would be self-sustaining with students paying for their courses. The remaining \$50,000 would be split between the middle and elementary schools. There were several elementary schools which have TIP (Tutoring in Pennsylvania Program) or ASPIRE money and their summer school programs are run by using those funds. The other schools would need to tap into the general budget if they were to run a program. She said that Dr. Donaher had met with principals from different levels and between those meetings and monthly curriculum meetings, they continued to work through the details regarding the structure of elementary support so they could still have interventions with minimal impact on the general operating budget. Another piece of discussion with principals was possible elementary school site consolidation, keeping in mind the impact of transportation costs. They did expect to have some reduction in services at the elementary school level.

Mrs. Katona stated the last Curriculum and Instruction cut in red, found in the six percent column, was the reduction of \$10,000 for conference attendance. This year they had begun to seek conferences funded by alternative sources and to carefully identify the appropriate staff, which should attend with a follow-up requirement to share the information with other staff members. The same practice would continue next year, but some funding needed to be maintained because there were some essential conferences and workshops, which were not funded by alternative means. The funding extends beyond her department involving training of principals or teachers in reading apprenticeship. They would be looking at the response to intervention for their students so training was needed in that area.

Mrs. Katona asked to consider the cuts in black only if necessary. Under the category of Curriculum Enrichment, she noted the \$10,000 cut made to district mandated field trips at the elementary level. She initially looked at the Historic Bethlehem Partnership, which could be affected by the cut. She doesn't anticipate cutting anything which was clearly in local partnership. Mrs. Katona noted the cost for second grade students to visit the Kemmerer Museum was \$5,000. The third grade students visit the Burnside Plantation, and the fourth grade visit the Moravian Museum at a cost of \$2,500, respectively. She was looking to find an alternative method to continue the program without the expenditures.

Mrs. Katona brought attention to the largest cut, a ten percent reduction, \$110,000, which reflected the amount to outfit the Liberty High School Band, which was in need of uniforms this year. She realized the pride associated with the band and the desire to have them look their best to go along with the quality of their music. She commented that the number of students in addition to the detail of the uniforms made an impact on that figure.

Dr. Lewis noted that the subject was heavily discussed during cabinet and stated that they delayed the purchase of uniforms in the previous years' budget and simply went back on the rotation. He said it was an area which had some "wiggle" room, if those thoughts were included in her deliberations.

Mrs. Katona noted the \$10,000 Academic Intervention cut in black, an area which she really did not want to go into, but it was something that might not have a huge impact. The cut would result in a reduction of approximately 15 hours of interventions at each school. She stated that for some schools it might not be significant but for other buildings, it might have an impact. She also considered another \$10,000 cut for conference expenses in Curriculum and Instruction, but it would result in having only a few thousand dollars and as she previously explained, there was a need to continue with professional development. Mrs. Katona noted that there were also many young newly hired teachers and wanted to ensure support in that area.

Mrs. Katona stated that Dr. Donaher met with the athletic directors and worked through a variety of scenarios with none being easy. Their goal was to maintain critical programs while still contributing to budget development. She asked him to further explain the details.

Dr. Donaher stated a total of \$37,100 in the two percent reduction category, as a result of a reduction in PIAA competitions involving some of their athletic programs would begin this summer. He further explained that golf and tennis matches would be reduced from 20 to 18, respectively, with volleyball being reduced from 24 to 22. He noted that boys and girls basketball, soccer, wrestling, and swimming/diving would be reduced from 20 to 18 scheduled events. They were anticipating the realization of approximately \$25,000 due to those event reductions. It also included the police and medical personnel, in addition to the people who collect tickets, transportation to and from the games and also the salaries of the officials. He also said it would include the junior varsity and freshman games which involved a savings in transportation at almost every game. They also recommended the Rifle Team be cut as an athletic sport at both Liberty and Freedom High Schools which would result in a savings of \$11,600 and they would also do their best to reduce supplies used by approximately \$500. The reduced amount totaled \$37,100 in the two percent range.

Dr. Donaher moved onto the four percent column and brought attention to \$3,260, which were miscellaneous expenses, attempting to focus on the amount of paper used. The majority of the figure was \$2,760, used for bus transportation to take band members from Freedom High School to the Bethlehem Area School District Stadium when Freedom plays a home game. The suggestion was for the students be allowed or told to report to the stadium before the game without the aid of district buses to transport them back and forth.

Dr. Donaher focused on the six percent range and noted a reduction in their paper usage, contributing to another \$2,000, some of which could apply to the scorebooks, reducing from three books to one and cutting down on the flyers generated, relative to upcoming games and not necessarily the program booklets associated with the Booster Club.

He noted in the eight percent reduction range, there was an additional \$11,000, attributed to discontinuing the practice of giving athletes \$5 for meals when they are involved in tournaments. It was previously \$20 per day if it was a full-day event or \$5 for a given meal.

Dr. Donaher stated that in the ten percent column, approximately \$6,500 of the \$16,554, would be a result in the delay of new uniforms for perhaps one or two sport teams, which were up for a five-year renewal at Freedom and/or Liberty High Schools, unless they were in dire need of replacement.

Dr. Donaher stated that the remaining \$10,000 provided for athletic physical examinations. The cost was \$10 for the first physical examination during the school year with a recertification fee of \$5, both provided by the district. The proposed change would be to charge students for the physical fees with the exception of students in the free or reduced lunch program.

The final area to note would be the intramural category with a \$10,500 deduction in the last ten percent column. It reflected a reduction of a total of 480 hours across all schools regarding intramural funds. One option would be to deduct a specific number of hours from every school and another way would be to deduct ten percent from each school. Dr. Donaher noted that the elementary schools received 69 hours of intramural time at a rate of approximately \$32 per hour. The middle schools each received 300 hours and both high schools received 650 hours each. If they deducted 24 hours from each school, it would have a greater impact on the elementary level as opposed to the high school level. A ten percent reduction would be approximately 7 hours at every elementary school, 30 hours at every middle school and 65 hours at each high school.

President Leeson opened the floor to questions.

Director Follweiler inquired about testing with Mrs. Katona and said she had referenced that one of the reasons they could make a reduction was because they had identified alternate funding. She asked if the alternate funding was guaranteed or was it something involved in the proposal phase.

Mrs. Katona replied that in part, they looked at their EAP (Educational Assistance Program), which they would continue to receive. She asked Mr. Smith to contribute to the discussion.

Mr. Eric Smith added that the 4SIGHT, which was their primary testing for grades three through eleven, was paid for by the Educational Assistance Program funding, which has been essentially level since he had been in central office. He said they did not hear anything about how the grant looked for next year, but he expected it to be level funding with this year.

Director Follweiler asked if the statement that they were confident in reducing their spending but not their services was true.

Mrs. Katona and Mr. Smith agreed.

President Leeson inquired if there were any other questions from the board or public regarding the current subject.

Director Haytmanek directed his comment to Dr. Donaher and conveyed his disappointment with the sport cuts, in particular, the intramurals. He felt that the district shouldn't require the students to provide payment for their own athletic physical.

Dr. Donaher commented that they thought by using the threshold of free or reduced lunch would be appropriate.

Director Haytmanek thought it would be a challenge.

President Leeson commented that the original intramural cut was \$105,000 and at present they were discussing a \$10,500 reduction.

Mrs. Katona replied that the \$105,000 would have insisted that the individual schools figure out the cuts by themselves and agreed that it was a significant difference.

Director Dexter reviewed that it was stated there were 69 hours at the elementary level and asked if there were any schools that didn't use the money.

Dr. Donaher replied that recently, RASA and Career Academy both were given 45 hours respectively, which were moved in order to give them some opportunities. He noted that in keeping track, the schools were more aware, with students participating in bowling and ice-skating. The middle schools and high schools use the budget and would use more if they could obtain funding with the weight rooms and other areas that provide students with an opportunity to stay in shape and use those facilities on a daily basis. He noted the program hours were used to reward the students for good behavior and academics.

Director Cann asked if there was a reduced amount of program hours which would be considered manageable and not excessive.

Dr. Donaher thought if they went beyond ten percent, it would be very tight. They discussed the high school division would probably prefer that every school lose 24 hours because if they consider ten percent, then they would lose 65 hours. In speaking with Mr. Senneca and Mr. Harris, they understood and were willing to adjust their schedules. They might have to cut back on the weight and fitness schedule but if it got to the point that they could only be open twice per week, then there would be concern regarding the limited ability for students to use the facilities.

Director McKeon asked about the approximate \$32 per hour rate of pay for an individual to oversee intramural activity.

Dr. Donaher replied that it was the rate which was paid to the teachers.

Dr. Lewis added that it was part of their contract.

Director McKeon stated he inquired because if they were able to reduce the hourly rate, then it might be possible to keep the existing hours. He also asked about the number of assistant athletic directors at the high schools.

Dr. Donaher replied that it was assigned by season, noting there was a 1.0 but it is often split into two .5 positions.

Director McKeon asked if any of the individuals were non-teachers. He said most of the individuals were probably teaching throughout the day and asked if it was possible to convert the positions to an hourly rate when they were performing in that position.

Dr. Lewis asked Mr. Gross for comment and asked if it was also a negotiated supplemental position.

Mr. Gross replied that he believed the assistant athletic directors were part of the Non-Instructional Meet and Discuss group.

Director McKeon added that with the assumption that it was not a contractual obligation, they weren't impacting the individuals.

Dr. Lewis asked if he was suggesting placing them on the hourly schedule in order to save money. He stated they would have to evaluate their actual stipend.

Mr. Gross added that it was not a formalized contract.

Dr. Lewis said that they would have to meet, negotiate and develop a memorandum of understanding on a particular line. He added that Director McKeon's suggestions technically had merit if it were monetarily beneficial.

President Leeson asked if they could look to see if it was monetarily beneficial, giving some time for research and perhaps bring it to the next meeting.

Dr. Lewis inquired about the present salary for an assistant athletic director.

Mr. Gross replied that it was dependent upon their particular step along with seniority and gave an example of someone at Step 11 who earned \$3,264 for one season, and noted that it was a high-end figure.

Dr. Lewis asked Dr. Donaher to research how many hours they typically put into the position.

Director McKeon commented that a 1.0 position would be approximately \$30,000.

Dr. Donaher added that the seasonal position was generally restricted to a 1.0 or two .5 positions.

Mr. Gross added that because there are three seasons, if an individual did one season as an assistant athletic director, the position would be a .33 position.

Director McKeon stated that he misinterpreted the figure as \$9,000 for each season to be approximately \$30,000.

Director Follweiler asked if students not involved with other sports taking advantage of the intramural opportunities.

Dr. Donaher replied that in speaking with Mr. Harris, his comment was related to the power weight room at Freedom High School which was approximately five or six years old. He said there were approximately 77 student athletes who use it daily and they tend to be varsity athletes who have a goal to gain strength. He noted the fitness room at Freedom High School, which had Lifecycles® and various machines, had approximately 30-35 students per day who were typically non-varsity athletes. He said that some students were looking for cardiovascular improvement, which they found at the fitness room.

Director Follweiler commented that the traditional thought of an intramural was that it was a sport which was not provided on an interscholastic basis. She gave the example of lacrosse or something for which the school didn't have a team. She said that customarily, the weight room would have been consumed by the wrestling or football teams so with consideration of the costs, she certainly wanted it available for students who were not on the par nor have the interest or time to join the athletic team, because they wanted to encourage physical fitness for all students. When viewing cost savings, she wanted to ensure that those students are reserved for the time.

Dr. Donaher replied that the fitness room comes in more than the weight room for those students, and noted that they tend to be an average student who was looking for an opportunity for cardiovascular fitness.

Director Follweiler also asked if time in the weight room for specific teams was part of their practice or was the extra weight training off of their regular season schedule.

Dr. Donaher replied affirmatively and said it was after-school training when the athletes were off-season. He said that some students might rotate through because they must train in the weight room for their in-season team but most of the students using the room were in off-season. The middle schools tend to do a little more of what she mentioned with a cross-country in-house team and basketball tournaments with regard to intramurals.

Director Follweiler stated that activities such as bowling and ice skating were fabulous activities for both physical and social health. She asked if they were considered intramural activities or field trips.

Mrs. Katona replied that they were considered a field trip.

President Leeson commented that actually it was neither. The ice rink was part of fifth grade physical education and was a requirement. She noted that it was free with the exception of transportation.

Mrs. Katona and Dr. Lewis both reiterated that it came in as a field trip.

Director Cann thought it would be helpful if Dr. Donaher could explain exactly what the intramural program covered because she thought there might be a misconception regarding what falls into the category. She recalled that Mr. Craig informed her that the weight room for the football and basketball players was intramural and added that she wasn't aware of that, thinking that it was part of the varsity sport.

Dr. Donaher explained that at the high school level, most of the intramural funding was used for the oversight of the weight and fitness rooms at Freedom High School. At Liberty High School, because they don't have the fitness room, most of the time was spent supervising the weight room for student athletes.

Director Cann asked if intramural costs at the high school level were directly related to varsity sports.

Dr. Donaher replied that the opportunity was provided for all students to participate. He said one did not have to be a varsity athlete to participate but most of the regular participants were affiliated with one or more varsity teams.

Director Cann asked if intramurals at the middle and elementary school level were held the hour after school and excluded ice skating and bowling.

Mrs. Katona replied that the ice skating had previously come through on field trip forms for the 5th grade classes during the school day so it would not be considered an intramural activity.

Dr. Lewis stated that Mr. Santoro, Broughal Middle School Principal, ran a good intramural program and asked him to give them a glimpse of how it was run.

Mr. Santoro replied that the program involved students who weren't necessarily on a particular varsity team. They presently had a program running for a few weeks where students used the gymnasium after an academic program where they participated in basketball or volleyball. The students also could use a ping pong table or a universal gym. He noted the activities were focused on students who normally wouldn't have the opportunity. Mr. Santoro added that the program was athletic in nature and was a healthy release after a long day. There were also programs that Dr. Donaher discussed where they would have intramural track or swimming tournaments for the students. Their goal was to get many students involved after school. He also mentioned that they take them bowling once per week if

possible.

Director Cann asked if the program ran across all school levels.

Principal Tachovsky from James Buchanan Elementary School commented that on Thursdays and Fridays they have an intramural basketball program and there is also another program, which is more academic related to foreign language.

Principal Lynch from William Penn Elementary stated that their intramural program involved basketball and cheerleading.

Ms. Gail Nolf from Career Academy stated the students who are passing their classes play basketball, lift weights and run twice a week.

Director Cann wanted to be certain that the board understood how the funding was used.

Director Follweiler added that because there were so many people involved in the program, she had a question about the ten percent reduction. She asked if that figure would hurt any of the established programs or was there some leeway.

Principal Lynch thought that it depended upon the schools that receive ASPIRE money, noting that the schools that don't receive that funding probably rely a lot on the intramural funding.

Director Follweiler commented that it was part of a balancing act.

President Leeson brought up the proposal to bring the full-time athletic directors at Freedom and Liberty High Schools re-enter the classroom for 25 percent of their time. She asked if there were any problems associated with teaching one class per semester.

Dr. Donaher replied that their responsibilities associated with their position were created throughout the school day such as required meetings. He thought that there were many days where they wouldn't be able to be in the classroom for that one period. His second thought was that within the Lehigh Valley Conference, there was only one school which didn't have a full-time athletic director and that was Bethlehem Catholic High School. Dr. Donaher noted that their athletic director teaches a class by his own request. He considered the huge number of student athletes involved in the programs at both high schools, which required support necessary from someone who solely held the position and also supervised the coaching staff in order for them to face their daily challenges. He concluded that he would not recommend the proposal.

President Leeson stated that a few years ago they placed a middle school coordinator at the middle school level, which was somewhat controversial at

the inception and she thought they were supposed to revisit the program. If they wanted to retain their athletic directors as full-time positions and considering that the high school athletic directors were responsible for the program all the way down the line, she asked if they could consider eliminating the middle school coordinator position to realize a small savings.

Dr. Lewis asked Mr. Gross about the middle school athletic coordinator stipend and noted that they also teach a full schedule.

Mr. Gross replied that there was one position which paid \$6,500.

Dr. Donaher added that within each middle school, there was a person who receives some intramural hours, more or less on an hourly basis, as they do work to coordinate schedules and field needs. He stated that Ms. McClarin was the middle school athletic coordinator.

Dr. Lewis asked Mr. Santoro about the position and inquired if they were receiving services which were significantly important.

Mr. Santoro replied that he went directly to Jim Altimare within his building to make sure that all staffing was in place in addition to game help. He stated that Mr. Altimare coordinated services and certain scheduling with Ms. McClarin. She handled the team scheduling and orchestrated the use of alternate sites. He said he has had conversations with Ms. McClarin to resolve certain situations but he relied on Jim Altimare, who he thought received a few hours in terms of pay, and ensures that the equipment is set-up for games along with securing game help.

President Leeson also pointed out that they recently sent someone to “School Dude”, with the idea that they were going to be able coordinate building schedules electronically.

Dr. Lewis deferred to Mr. Gilliland.

Mr. Gilliland commented that she was correct in that part of “School Dude” would coordinate varsity athletic scheduling and he was sure they could do the same with the intermediate school activities as well. He noted that the program involved turning on the HVAC systems and the other end would be to be able to invoice the groups who use their facilities.

President Leeson inquired if there was some way for it to automatically go onto a schedule all at once.

Mr. Gilliland replied that he was not familiar with the scheduling aspect and referred the question to Mr. Harris and Mr. Senneca.

President Leeson thought they might be able to take some of the responsibilities and divide “the pie”, using the updated technology to pick up

some pieces and possibly save some money.

Dr. Donaher commented that when they play a middle school football game, after the game, the players would run ten offensive plays. He said that was no longer acceptable by the PIAA and they now have to play another full game. He said they have run into a situation where the middle schools bring enough participants to play two games. They then must figure out a way to coordinate games at both the stadium and possibly also at East Hills Middle School. They could cut down the game time somewhat but they can no longer just run “ten and ten.”

Dr. Lewis asked who coordinated the middle school schedules.

Dr. Donaher replied that it was Joan McClarin, and added that she was the one who determined the scheduling for various locations.

President Leeson stated that eight years ago they did not have the position.

Dr. Donaher commented that Allentown School District had re-entered the mix with middle school team involvement. He noted that when rain-outs occurred, re-scheduling was involved.

President Leeson asked to consider reviewing the position for the next meeting.

Director Follweiler asked if, at one time, there was one athletic director for both high schools.

Dr. Lewis made comment with regard to the number of events for one individual.

Director Follweiler said that she was wondering if they had more assistants at that time and that it coordinated into the same financial amount with less head count. She wondered if they had one athletic director, but a few assistant positions for the middle schools.

Mr. Gross commented that it was also pre-Title IX.

Director McKeon noted that many years ago the high school varsity coach was responsible all the way down to the middle school. He knew there was meeting with Liberty and Freedom High Schools and the previous administration the decision was made to add the middle school athletic coordinator. Prior to that he thought the high schools operated athletically independent of each other to a certain extent.

Dr. Donaher added that the principal at the middle school still remained as the person in charge of hiring for their building. He said the four middle school principals were very good about incorporating and requesting advice but it was still their call as far as who was hired as a coach. He said the coordination

provided student athletes with the opportunity to grow in the system. Director Dexter asked why the rifle team was chosen as the sport to be eliminated and how many students participated at both schools.

Dr. Donaher replied that traditionally there were somewhere between 20 and 25, with sometimes even 30 students on the rifle team at Liberty High School. He said their inability to schedule competitions was the main reason why it was the one sport of focus. There were not many schools in the local area, other than perhaps Salisbury that participated in the sport. The other schools were located outside the area, having to travel quite a distance to locate competition. He commented that Liberty and Freedom High Schools could compete against one another.

Dr. Lewis commented that Pocono Mountain dropped the program.

Dr. Donaher reminded the board that they cut the sport last year, and then it was reinstated.

Director Cann thought that a student from Liberty High School went far this year in competition.

Mr. Gilliland stated that he was previously involved with a high school rifle team and noted that PIAA dropped it as a recognized sport. He didn't have knowledge if it was reinstated.

Director Cann inquired about the competition level for rifle teams.

Dr. Donaher commented that Liberty and Freedom High Schools have always had strong rifle teams as far as the contestants and performance of the student athletes.

Director Dexter asked how the rifle team was selected if they needed to save \$11,000. If there were 25 or 30 participants at Liberty High School, she asked if Freedom High School had the same amount of student involvement.

Dr. Donaher replied that he didn't believe it was the same at Freedom High School.

Dr. Lewis added that it was the only non-PIAA sport which they supported.

Director Dexter expressed that there was money to send students to Hershey Park and to Six Flags Adventure, and to send the basketball and football teams anywhere they wanted to go to play scrimmages, post-season games, or use the weight room, but they choose the rifle team, which was one of the least expensive programs where they reached students who didn't participate in traditional sports. She didn't care about how much trouble it was to schedule a match. She said there were both athletic directors, assistants and coordinators along with people who received stipends, so if they had trouble, they would get over it. She asked if the coaches came to them and informed

them that there was not enough interest.

Dr. Donaher said the recommendation was from the athletic directors with consideration of the need to cut a specific amount of money. They felt this was an area that had the least impact on the students. He thought that only five or six students shoot at a meet.

Director McKeon commented that he was more than willing to support the team and would rather consider eliminating an assistant coaching position at a multi-coached sport. He said that he would rather eliminate a salary with the head coach dividing the remaining monetary figure into .5 or .25 positions among his assistants. He would rather go that route and take the children out of the process.

Director Dexter wanted to figure out how they could fund a sport that benefits the students.

Director Follweiler asked how many students participate in other sports which have smaller teams such as golf or tennis.

Dr. Donaher replied that golf could have 10, 12 or 15 students on a team. All students participate but only the top five scores are judged.

Director Follweiler asked that if there were 30 students interested in the rifle team but approximately 12 in golf, she didn't understand why the rifle team was the least impact to eliminate. She said that she didn't understand the math.

Dr. Donaher stated that it was the athletic directors recommendation whether it was transportation costs considering the location of most of the matches and the students had to be taken out of school before the end of the school day. They felt that the inability to get the matches which were postponed and any type of post-season tournament was not there because the surrounding interest was not there and they just felt the sport itself was struggling to survive.

Director Follweiler asked how many dollars in total was eliminated. She thought that it might have been lumped in with some other items.

Dr. Donaher replied that it was approximately \$11,500.

Dr. Lewis inquired if the figure included space or were they getting free rifle range space.

Dr. Donaher commented that they used the range at Liberty High School.

Dr. Lewis asked if the range was being refurbished.

President Leeson polled the board, asking if anyone was in favor of cutting the rifle team. After receiving no affirmative responses, President Leeson

stated that she believed the silent response indicated the answer.
Dr. Lewis said they then needed to provide another red item.

President Leeson replied that they had already given them two to look at.

Director Follweiler recalled at a previous meeting that someone stated that they better not bring forth the rifle team as a cut.

Director Dexter stated she did read it in the minutes this week.

President Leeson asked if there were any other comments regarding athletics at the present time.

Director Follweiler commented that she thought it was a great windfall for their process that the PIAA reduced the number of competitions. They didn't have to cut something that they would have been spending. In the past she was involved as a coach with interscholastic athletics and when they had less competition within their conference, they sought additional meets outside. She thought they had to be careful to ensure that they wouldn't do that in order to stay within budget.

Dr. Donaher said that it was the state's directive and not the conference in limiting the maximum number of games that could be scheduled, and he noted that volleyball was being reduced from 24 to 22 contests.

Director Follweiler asked if they did it because the students were actually becoming physically taxed or because the scheduling was falling behind.

Dr. Donaher read from the news release, stating: *"The recommendations of the PIAA Strategic Planning Committee to shorten the winter sports season by one week to assist in reducing the overlap between the inter-district football playoffs and the start of the winter sports season, effective July 1, 2008.*

Director Dexter inquired about the budget column location for the discussion about Freedom High School Band Students reporting directly to the Liberty High School Athletic Field for home football games.

Dr. Donaher replied that it was in the four percent column.

Dr. Lewis thought it was a larger number and asked Mr. Gilliland if it was part of his presentation for next time. He recalled that it was brought up during cabinet.

Director Follweiler thought that it was just for the band and not for the football players.

Dr. Donaher added that he didn't have the players in his section.

Dr. Lewis concluded that it was listed under Transportation. President Leeson commented that they could discuss it next time.

Director McKeon asked if the district had any potential liability issues with asking the students to leave from home and travel directly to a different facility.

Dr. Lewis replied that it was inter-district and was also their home field. They were recommending that it be done with both middle and high schools. He stated that when it was discussed, they talked about Southside students who attended East Hills and when they played at Broughal Middle School, they drove over to East Hills to get the bus in order to drive back to Broughal Middle School. He thought the sequence was illogical and noted that it waste of gasoline for both the district and parents. He stated that the recommendation would be forthcoming and recalled a figure of \$19,000 being discussed.

Director Dexter asked if they really thoroughly thought about it because she was attempting to vision where they would put extra vehicles at Liberty High School Stadium. She also was concerned about where the band members would store their belongings such as their raincoats, bottled water and any other items they would need. She noted that some of the students had very large instruments.

Dr. Lewis replied that the equipment and game trucks would still be utilized.

Director Dexter suggested that a room be assigned to the band where they could bring their items. She also inquired about the parking accommodations.

Dr. Lewis stated that it was discussed and noted that parents usually drop their children off and park anyway in order to watch the event, so the estimated impact would be negligible. There were some parents who didn't attend every game and they simply dropped off their children. They also discussed a specific location for staging, using locker rooms dedicated to Freedom High School students or the middle school students. The equipment and band trucks would still carry the students' instruments.

Mr. Gross stated that when he was a Freedom High School Band Member in high school, they used the Liberty High School Band Room as their staging area because Liberty was away and Freedom was home. They had a few band parents there to assist in the monitoring of the students.

Dr. Lewis believed it would be addressed in the next budget hearing. He recalled that they were spending approximately \$19,000 to \$20,000 for what they considered to be a convenience and thought it could be cut out of the budget.

Director Dexter inquired if the change was run by the Freedom High School Band to receive their input.

Dr. Donaher and Dr. Lewis both replied that they did not speak with Mr. Moran or Mr. MacGill.

Director Dexter requested their input. She also suggested that if they were considering the use of Liberty High School's Band Room as a staging area, they should contact the Liberty Music Director to inquire if there would be an impact. She noted that although their band will be at an away game, there were unsecured instruments in the room because some students had two instruments.

Dr. Lewis replied that they ran it by the Freedom High School Athletic Director, Mr. Harris and stated that he was aware of the request.

Dr. Donaher stated that he would speak with Mr. Harris to inquire if discussion was held with Mr. Moran.

Director Dexter inquired if the football team would also report directly to Liberty High School.

Dr. Lewis responded that everybody on all levels would report to the school.

President Leeson asked if there was any more discussion on the Curriculum and Instruction items.

Director Koch asked if one could assume that the \$110,000 figure listed under new band uniforms was in black and therefore not a recommended cut.

Mrs. Katona replied that they had a great deal of discussion about the subject and noted she originally had it in red ink but when she recognized that the consideration of the St. Cyril and Methodius lease allowed at least ten percent in the cuts, she then changed it to black.

Director Koch inquired about the frequency of uniform replacement, asking if it was every seven or eight years.

Mrs. Katona stated that the Liberty High School Band received new uniforms in 2001, so it had actually gone beyond six years.

Director Koch stated that as a former band parent of two children, she was aware of the poor condition of uniforms when they were at the end of a cycle. She commented that the parents worked very hard in an attempt to keep them looking as nice as possible, but, by the time they get to that stage, they were in fairly bad shape and she hoped they wouldn't delay or cut the purchase. She said that many band parents would be upset if they cut the purchase.

Dr. Lewis replied that Director Koch's recollection was accurate with regard to many years ago but noted that they now have the uniforms refurbished on an annual basis. He noted that they wrestled with the decision and the reason they did was that the prior board had delayed the purchase of uniforms by one year and he didn't think any of their groups looked tattered as a result. The item did have mixed reviews and they left the decision up to the individuals making the presentation.

Director Koch added that it was of those situations where perhaps they should hear from the band parents to determine if they thought the uniforms were in need of replacement.

President Leeson stated that she was aware of the yearly cycle with regard to the uniforms but noted that each uniform had a different cost. She inquired about the costs associated with the other groups such as the middle schools.

Mrs. Katona replied that the cost of the middle school uniforms was approximately \$70,000.

President Leeson inquired about the cost of Freedom High School uniforms.

Mr. Gross replied that he didn't have the cost but he commented that Liberty High School uniforms were the most expensive.

President Leeson asked about the possibility of going to an eight-year cycle and split Liberty into a two-year cycle, so that they would even out their yearly costs. She gave the example of \$70,000 and \$84,000 and then \$55,000 and \$55,000.

Mr. Gross stated that as a former high school band director, he said that one of the major concerns was the dye lot. He noted that every time the manufacturer runs a bolt of worsted wool for the uniforms, the dye comes out slightly different. There may be a lighter blue slack versus a royal or navy blue, which would not be appropriate. He commented that he thought Mr. MacGill would say that if they were to get them, they would want them purchased in one lot. He spoke with Mr. MacGill about it because he was curious as to some of the gold and black epaulettes ordered along with the specialty buttons. He noted the \$110,000 was attributed to the size of the band and said that he would be very surprised if that amount covered the purchase.

President Leeson said she was attempting to be creative and asked if they budgeted \$55,000 one year and \$55,000 for the next year, but purchased them all in one year and then go to an eight-year cycle in order to even out their expenses.

Dr. Lewis thought that Mr. Majewski (who was not in attendance) would tell them that it couldn't be done under GASB because they previously tried it with reading textbooks and they could not bridge them. He specified that they

must make payment within the budget year.

Director Follweiler asked for clarification on \$125,000 cut in the summer school budget. She asked if that they were changing the structure to be more self-sustaining.

Mrs. Katona disagreed and clarified that the high schools had typically been self-sustaining along with the middle schools, for the most part. The elementary schools came in three years ago and those costs started to be paid from the budget. They were looking at a self-sustaining program which would have some funding so that they could continue to remain in the elementary schools as much as possible. The middle schools need the program for various reasons and they would be able to look at the high school students who receive free and reduced lunch and assist those children. She reiterated that the high school program had typically been self-sustaining.

Director Follweiler was concerned because it was a large amount of money to consider cutting and that it was not in column B and they were taking it out of column A, unless of course it was double. She was concerned about students who needed summer school intervention.

Dr. Lewis reported that they left \$50,000 in the budget and felt that it was adequate to run the program. He said that it sort of had its own amorphic growth. He noted that if they were going to have specialty programs, they would have to be self-sustained.

Director Follweiler commented that she pictured summer school as students who needed extra educational help and not daycare.

Dr. Lewis responded that the remedial piece was the \$50,000 for the free and reduced lunch students.

Director Follweiler felt that the summer school program was traditionally a program for extra support in order for advancement to the next grade and she understood that the program morphed into more than that.

Mrs. Katona said that they have discussed other program resources with their elementary principals so that the schools that don't have assistance, but still had students in need, could run a program, even if it wasn't the same length of time as in the past.

Mr. McKeon stated that it was part of the budget overrun. The children at the elementary school level were not necessarily academic deficient as compared to the high school level.

Mrs. Katona added that the two key areas at the elementary school level were students who typically were in need of supplemental assistance in reading or math.

Director Dexter commented that she had the same issue with summer school and said that at the beginning of the presentation that there would be some impact if they removed \$125,000. She asked for more details about the impact. Director Dexter noted that a few years ago a parent of a Clearview Elementary School student who was struggling with reading approached her and they didn't have a summer school program. One of the special education teachers told the parent that it was too bad their child didn't attend Fountain Hill Elementary School because they could have put him in an enrichment program. She noted that because Clearview was not a Title 1 School, they might not have the same summer resources. Director Dexter inquired about the student who was in a school that did not receive Title 1 support, and was in need or would benefit from summer school, would that student be able to access one of the programs held at another school? She also asked about the cost of tuition and transportation.

Mrs. Katona replied that those issues were being discussed between the principals and Dr. Donaher. She said that there would be some money available to assist with transportation.

Director Dexter asked if they agreed to the \$125,000 cut, would a student identified as in need of services in the district, no matter what school they attended, still be able to access summer school.

Mrs. Katona replied that it was their intention. She expressed that they along with the elementary school principals do not want to see the summer school program eliminated in its entirety. They were all willing to work together to come to solutions.

Dr. Lewis thought the consolidation of services was the design. He explained that they had 16 summer schools and the amorphous development could be better managed and economies of scale could be applied. The elementary school principals are now working with Dr. Donaher, who oversaw summer school.

President Leeson stated that a few years ago, they had what was called Surgical Summer School particularly at the middle school level and asked if they were still offering the program.

Dr. Donaher replied that the current summer school program for middle schools was similar to what Director McKeon discussed as far as it being related to credit acquisition.

Dr. Donaher noted that students identified at the core middle schools who failed two or more major subjects in eighth grade were basically told that if they did not take the subjects in summer school, they would be retained.

Dr. Donaher said there were 55 students in the middle school summer program, which was a credit attainment program, so they could be promoted to the ninth grade. He explained that the surgical summer school program, which Director Leeson mentioned, was almost in weekly chunks and if one didn't pass multiplication, they only had to attend for the week that concentrated on that area. The student didn't have to attend for addition, subtraction or division. Last year's summer school program was more like the high school program where they took a math, science, social studies or English course.

President Leeson thought the Surgical Summer School was based on standards based assessments, so if a student's writing did not meet the standards, then they would attend to work on that area. She questioned why they got away from that model.

Dr. Donaher replied that he could not address that question. He said that summer school served two purposes, either as enrichment or remediation and for years they based their focus on remediation as opposed to enrichment. He thought there was more enrichment at the elementary level.

President Leeson asked Dr. Lewis if he knew why they changed the summer school program considering it was standards based program, further stating that it set safety nets for students who did not meet the standards.

Dr. Lewis deferred to Mr. Santoro who was familiar with the program.

Mr. Santoro commented that the decision was to eliminate the matrix and therefore took away the ability to decide each child's deficiency. He stated that students who presently attend summer school have failed either one or two major subjects. If the student failed three major subjects, they did not get an opportunity to attend summer school.

President Leeson asked if there were any questions or comments pertaining to the subject. Seeing none, she asked for another topic to be discussed.

Director McKeon noted the \$10,000 in black under the six percent column for Curriculum Enrichment, which was predominantly attributed to field trips. He questioned the district's policy on school field trips.

Mrs. Katona replied that there were different district trips, which had come together over the years and was uncertain about their origin. For example, their elementary schools visit the Weller Center through a partnership where there are a variety of activities. She also spoke of the Historical Bethlehem Partnership, the Children's Theatre of Bethlehem, the Ballet Guild, the Allentown Art Museum and Young Audiences of Eastern Pennsylvania. Whenever a trip was considered, they always looked for a connection to curriculum standards and whether it was in line with district goals.

Director McKeon asked if there was an unwritten ground rule as far as the number of trips the classrooms could take such as one per semester.

Mrs. Katona believed the schools try to be fair in spreading the wealth by not sending the same students to the outside activities. They also monitor the trips so that the students are not out of the classroom for more than a given amount of time.

Director McKeon stated that he did not want to interfere with the educational process but he was also concerned about the cost of transportation for the trips, which could be substantial.

Mrs. Katona agreed that transportation comes in as the bigger costs for the trips.

Dr. Lewis stated that Mr. Gilliland was addressing that in his section.

Mr. Gilliland commented that it had been discussed and there were some cuts in that area.

President Leeson asked for clarification about the district's field trip policy.

Mr. Gross replied that there was a policy but it didn't specify the number of trips, rather it pertained more to the guidelines as far as where they were permitted to go and the requirements of overnight trips.

President Leeson said that the high school has had some field trips such as the Business Department, who were going to Six Flags Great Adventure and the computer class went on three field trips last year. She noted that some of the trips have gotten somewhat carried away so she thought they should be looking at a policy on field trips to ensure they were relevant such as the Burnside Plantation, the Weller Center, and the Kemmerer Museum. They were all relatively local, low cost and high impact field trips. She thought there were field trips which have become far field from the educational base and noted that some of them were costing the district in transportation costs. She thought they could probably reduce their expenses without impacting the students. She was not in anyway recommending that they cut out a trip to Burnside Plantation or a trip to the art museum, which she considered to be wonderful field trips.

Dr. Lewis informed President Leeson that they eliminated the aforementioned amusement park trips this year. They also requested if an organization such as the PTO desired to sponsor a trip for recognition or positive behavior, that they fund the transportation. Mrs. Katona and he were scrutinizing the trips, unless they were justified by a positive behavior initiative where they were planned into the composition of a grant.

Mrs. Katona added that she had questioned many trips which have come across her desk. She has thought about different ways in approaching some of the trips next year and said that she would further discuss it with principals and cabinet. She said she didn't have a plan formulated in her head at this point.

Dr. Lewis noted that they should probably codify it as an administrative guideline or policy.

President Leeson agreed and said she believed there were other associated costs, which they probably were not calculating in their deductions. She said that if they were able to reduce their transportation expenses with field trips, they should also be able to show the figures.

Mr. Gilliland stated that Mr. Majewski had the estimated figures, which they would provide in the next presentation. He said it was a price per hour based on the bus driver's salary plus the cost of travel per mile.

President Leeson inquired about the \$10,000 in black located under Academic Interventions, and noted the approximate figure of 15 hours of intervention per school. She asked if it was tutoring intervention.

Dr. Lewis felt that they could sustain \$10,000, but he asked her to keep in mind that those schools do not receive EAP (Educational Assistance Program) or TIP (Tutoring in Pennsylvania) provisions. The \$100,000 in the budget was primarily for those which were middle and low impact.

President Leeson stated that she would not want to see that happen.

Mrs. Katona agreed with President Leeson's thoughts and stated that there may be schools, which wouldn't have a problem associated with the 15 hour reduction, but other schools might be hurt.

President Leeson asked if she was correct in that they agreed to reinsert the rifle team and didn't hear any major objections to the other considered items. In addition, they would like the team to come back to answer a few more questions with regard to the possibility of a few cuts.

Dr. Lewis recapitulated the following items of concern:

1. Review the assistant athletic director in a comparison of hourly rate versus salary.
2. Examine the middle school athletic position of approximately \$6,400.
3. Restore the rifle team.
4. Discuss the transportation of the band with both Freedom and Liberty High School Band Directors.
5. Examine field trip guidelines for codification and possible policy

development.

President Leeson agreed with Dr. Lewis' summary.

Director Dexter brought attention to Director Koch's comment regarding band uniforms.

Dr. Lewis replied that it had to be an "all or nothing" item so they left it in at the present time, but it would be something they could look at when they receive the comparison of all items.

Director Dexter agreed that it should be an "all or nothing" on the jackets, and inquired about splitting the purchase by buying the jackets one year and the pants the following year. She thought they purchased them from different vendors.

Mr. Gross agreed that it was an option.

Mr. Washington addressed the board with the proposed reductions for the Student Services Department as seen on page 2 which totaled 5.7 percent or \$94,737. He began with the two percent column and noted the travel and textbooks expenses in the Minority Affairs Department.

STUDENT
SERVICES –
PROPOSED
REDUCTIONS

Mr. Washington commented about the importance of travel because when grants were issued in Harrisburg, it was necessary for someone to go there to obtain necessary information. The Minority Affairs Department also provides informational textbooks to all of the school libraries. He noted that the Student Services expenses involved supplies, letterheads, and mailings involving student hearings. He stated that SPARK travel included home visits and was part of their program but, if they had to cut, their preference would be to cut as far away from the students as possible.

Mr. Gross interjected that part of the home visitation process is a contractual issue in which they were required to make a certain number of actual home visits and a certain number might be able to take place at the SPARK facility.

Mr. Washington added that they would look at an adjustment to the on-site/off-site schedule to research how many visits could be done on-site.

Mr. Washington noted the SPARK figure was rather high in supplies with the consideration that there are young children in the program and most of their supplies were consumables such as construction paper, paint, etc. He also mentioned the necessary equipment specific to early childhood, such as sand boxes, water tables and furniture.

The school resource officer salary at the Career Academy would be reduced by 1.0, which was part of the two percent reduction.

Dr. Lewis mentioned some of the SPARK items which they were looking at through Mrs. Cintrón's efforts such as classroom equipment areas and supplies with Pre-K extended funding. He said it was both a plus and a minus, with an attempt to move as much as possible to their grant driven resources. He didn't want the board to make an assumption that the program would be affected. He mentioned that today they discussed a shift in age level youngsters so they could draw down by using some smaller spaces for their 3-year old students.

President Leeson stated that they originally \$159,000 in cuts and presently they were looking at \$94,700 and asked about the difference.

Mr. Washington replied that they went deeper into some items such as medical but then after speaking with the department chairperson, he realized that certain physical examinations were required. He said that when he made the original cuts, there was \$10,000 in dental services but they were required to provide the services so it had to put it back into the budget.

Mr. Washington also noted that the other original cuts were to English Acquisition summer school and Colonial Academy.

President Leeson inquired what budget the Colonial Academy fell under.

Mr. Gross replied that The Colonial Academy budget was under Mr. Washington.

Dr. Lewis added that there were twelve middle school students who were being serviced at the Colonial Academy under alternative education and are no longer being serviced. He asked Mr. Agretto if 65 special education students were still being serviced.

Mr. Agretto agreed.

President Leeson reviewed that twelve alternative education students would no longer be serviced at the Colonial Academy.

Dr. Lewis stated there was an approximate savings of \$10,000 to \$12,000 per student.

President Leeson inquired if the cut was still coming out of the budget.

Mr. Washington replied that it was an intersystem cut and came out of the Colonial Intermediate Unit. Another intersystem cut from the Intermediate Unit was \$18,800 for truancy support.

Director Follweiler commented that the numbers were still in there but they

were just not in the Mr. Washington's account.

Dr. Lewis added that it would be discussed further at the final workshop.

Director Cann asked if the school resource officers were all police officers and if they were under Mr. Washington's budget.

Dr. Lewis asked Mrs. Cintrón if there were any school resource officers presently supported by grant funding.

Mrs. Cintrón stated, "No."

Director Cann asked if any of their contracts were coming up for renewal and asked if there any way to negotiate with the police department.

Dr. Lewis replied that they were presently pursuing a grant.

Mrs. Cintrón added that they made a joint application with the city for a grant which they have not received as of yet.

Dr. Lewis commented that they were constantly searching for grants which to underwrite but they were on a year-to-year basis. He noted that he didn't want to premature but there might be a second reduction of a school resource officer depending on the disposition of the Career Academy.

Director Cann again questioned about negotiating with the city police department. She heard that when a police officer attended an expulsion hearing, it counted as his workday and doesn't have to return to the school. She was not certain if it was factual.

Dr. Lewis and Mr. Washington replied that it was true if they attended an arrest hearing. It was part of their union contract.

Director Cann pointed out that there would be no officer in the school that day.

Dr. Lewis added that they had cross coverage, so they would move one around if necessary.

Director Cann inquired about the length of their contract with the district.

Dr. Lewis replied they were year-to-year contracts. He also noted that the officers might not always be the same each year because our district contracts the service and their personnel is managed by the city. He added that the district does not have the opportunity to negotiate their contract.

Mr. Gross commented that the district purchases their services but their labor agreement was with the city.

Dr. Lewis thought the police department has been very good with the district and he thought the only exception was when they had to go to an arrest hearing at the district magistrate and he reiterated that it was in their contract.

Director Follweiler inquired about the total number of resource officers.

Dr. Lewis replied there was one in the township and six in the city and they were stationed at specific schools.

Director Follweiler asked about the procedure if there was an issue at an elementary school which didn't have an officer.

Dr. Lewis reminded her that their elementary schools were in Freemansburg Borough, Fountain Hill Borough and also Hanover and Asa Packer Elementary schools were under Colonial Regional Police Department. A city elementary would receive coverage by a city patrolman and likewise the township. He commented that their coverage was excellent.

Director Dexter questioned the number of school resource officers and thought they had two officers at the Career Academy.

Mr. Washington stood corrected and said there were a total of eight officers.

Director Dexter reviewed that they were told there needed to be two officers at the Career Academy. She understood from Randy Miller that it was the police department, which communicated the requirement and asked if it would hold for next year.

Dr. Lewis replied no, but they haven't had the final discussion because as he previously stated, it could be either one or zero. He added that they negotiate on a year-to-year basis.

Director Dexter asked what would happen to the police sub-station if the Career Academy were moved.

Dr. Lewis replied that it would be the decision of the city.

Director Dexter inquired if the district spent money to install equipment and computers for the substation.

Dr. Lewis said that there was a computer and a telephone line.

Ms. Lutchter added that the telephone line was the network drop.

Director Koch had a question in which she stated she had asked previously. She stated that she understood that certain students receive homebound instruction for a few weeks or months but was interested in the average

number of students serviced at any given time.

Mr. Washington replied that they had a database and didn't have the information with him, but stated he could obtain the information rather quickly from Mrs. Cintrón's office.

Director Koch asked if the students in need of the service couldn't attend school because of health issues or were they expelled for a certain period of time.

Mr. Washington said there was a combination of both with the majority of students receiving the service for health reasons. He pointed out that if a student attended a hearing, the district owed them education and if that student was deemed dangerous and he cannot attend school, then the best route is homebound instruction. He added that the law stated that the student should be educated in the regular setting if possible.

Director Koch inquired if some students could be educated in a less expensive manner rather than sending individual teachers into possibly dangerous areas.

Dr. Lewis replied that they have significantly reduced homebound services. He said that the majority of adjudicated students have been referred to L/AMP which was a night school arrangement. He emphasized that it was one of the lowest line item budgets with regard to homebound in years. He added that Mr. Agretto has special education homebound instruction which occurred by virtue of medical justification.

Mr. Agretto offered that the status of his department's homebound needs changed yearly but would give them a report at the final workshop.

Director Koch's concern was not just financial but rather sending teachers to certain home visits which could be dangerous.

Mr. Washington stated that if the student was deemed dangerous, then they would arrange for the services in a public location. He expressed that they would not send a teacher into a dangerous situation.

President Leeson asked how much has the cost of homebound instruction been reduced.

Mr. Washington replied that they actually put more into the homebound budget this year. He said that he would need to perform a comparison from last year to this year and didn't have it with him.

President Leeson noted \$155,000 budgeted for the upcoming year and they actually spent \$156,646 in 2006-2007 and budgeted \$100,000 for that year.

Dr. Lewis stated that it was an overrun error.

President Leeson asked if the majority of students would be adjudicated students.

Mr. Washington disagreed and stated the majority of students would be categorized as medical regular education.

President Leeson requested the breakdown information.

Dr. Lewis asked Mrs. Cintrón about the annual average of students who receive homebound services.

Mrs. Cintrón replied that it varied. In one year they may have many accidents with many students placed on homebound for a variety of reasons and the following year it could be different. It was a difficult area to budget and analyze.

Dr. Lewis said that he might have misspoken to Mr. Washington in that his intention was to reduce the adjudicated students by using L/AMP as Director Koch requested.

President Leeson also mentioned having their hearings take place closer to the date of the incident would give them the ability to reduce homebound instruction. She thought they were attempting to try to pick up that process by holding the hearings faster. She understood that there were students in temporary medical need of homebound instruction but she thought they should still be able to see a savings which could not be seen on the chart.

Dr. Lewis replied that there was a cut noted but it was in black, which was driven by the adjudicated students. In other words, what was in there was untouched. It was area that, if they had to, would force, and if the student was in an expulsion loop, but he wasn't a threat, they would keep him in school until the expulsion hearing. He explained that everyone in the expulsion tunnel would not necessarily be on homebound instruction.

Mr. Washington concluded that they would bring forth an analysis of homebound students for the board to review.

Director Follweiler brought attention to housekeeping and supplies under SPARK in the ten percent column.

Mr. Washington replied that he cut it in half, getting fifty percent at the top and fifty percent at the bottom.

Dr. Lewis added that they could take more from one item, but instead, within the same account he took fifty percent from each item because he didn't want to take away the entire item.

Director Follweiler reviewed that he recommended the amount highlighted in red and the additional amount. She also asked if they received donations from Crayola, which would assist in supply savings.

Mr. Washington deferred her question to Mrs. Cintrón.

Mrs. Cintrón replied that the supplies ordered in the budget were necessary for the daily operation of the SPARK program.

Director Follweiler thought that in the past there were donations supplied.

Mr. Washington added that the supplies were needed to carry out the curriculum.

President Leeson commented that she thought SPARK was supposed to be a self-sustaining program and in fact, when they talked about it previously, she thought their expenses only involved employee medical coverage.

Dr. Lewis replied that he thought Mr. Gross had stated that part of the benefits were from the general operating budget and a minimum amount of items might appear in the same budget but he wasn't absolutely certain.

Mr. Gross added that some of the aides were in the general operating budget, in addition to some of the instructional assistants. After conferring with Mrs. Cintrón, he reported that six out of fourteen instructional assistants were in the general operating budget.

President Leeson stated that she thought when they started the program that it was going to be a self-sustaining pre-school program. She expressed that the daycare program generated a profit and inquired how much the SPARK Program cost the district.

Dr. Lewis replied that the cost to the general operating budget was \$630,000.

President Leeson reviewed that they spent \$524,000 in the 2006-2007 school year and they were presently at \$639,092.

Mr. Gross surmised that close to half of the amount were benefits and personnel who were not covered by the Accountability Block Grant or the Pre-K Counts Grant.

Dr. Lewis asked Mrs. Cintrón about the number of sections covered by the grants.

Mrs. Cintrón replied that they had five classrooms which were covered by grants, including the teacher, assistants, the start-up costs and supplies.

Dr. Lewis asked for assistance and reviewed that she has explained it on previous occasions. He asked if some of the remaining seven classrooms were going to be eligible for subsidy reimbursement.

Mrs. Cintrón agreed.

Dr. Lewis was uncertain about the number of students involved.

Mrs. Cintrón replied there were approximately 140 students involved.

Dr. Lewis estimated the expected subsidy to offset the budget would be \$225,000. He stated that any new sections would be one hundred percent covered.

Mrs. Cintrón replied that he was correct and they were in the process of submitting a continuation grant for those that are grant funded under Pre-K Counts. In April they were looking to submit another grant that came before the board last month for expenses, which would be one hundred percent covered.

President Leeson asked if they were saying that \$225,000 might come through which they were not accounting for at the present time.

Dr. Lewis replied affirmatively and stated it was increased subsidy by virtue of the four-year-old program increasing to five hours. He said that it would show up on the revenue side.

President Leeson asked when they would know if they received the subsidy.

Dr. Lewis said that he didn't think that it could be denied because it was not a grant but a regular basic educational subsidy.

Mr. Gross added that when the four-year-olds go to a five-hour day, they would then qualify for the subsidy.

President Leeson asked if it would show in revenue but not in decreased costs but they would be seeing the figure go from \$630,000 to approximately \$400,000.

Dr. Lewis replied that yes, in theory, but they will still see \$630,000 because it was general operating budget. The revenue would be adjusted. The net advantage is \$225,000.

President Leeson added that when they look at the budget, they consider revenue increases as well as budget decreases.

Director Follweiler inquired about an increase in expenses which would offset the revenue increase associated with the five-hour day in the four-year-old program.

Dr. Lewis replied that they were required to roll the SPARK teachers into the BASD contract. The decision was made under arbitration approximately seven or eight years ago. He said that Mr. Zeiger, Mr. Gross and he met and noted that the union was very receptive to the notion as long as they were not teaching more hours than the typical teacher. There were two pieces, which they would roll in, so there wouldn't be a separate contract, which Mr. Zeiger agreed upon.

Mr. Gross gave more detail about the changes stating there were two pieces of language involving family acts with sixty minutes of guaranteed continual family contact time. Their prep time was also guaranteed. For the three-year-old program, "x" number of family contacts must be in the home and "x" number can be at the site. For the four-year-olds, "x" number must be in the home and the balance may be at the SPARK site.

Dr. Lewis explained that the short answer was that there was no difference to run the program.

President Leeson asked if there were any more questions on the SPARK topic.

President Leeson questioned Mr. Washington about medical equipment.

Mr. Washington explained that it could be items such as scales, audiometers, thermometers and blood pressure equipment.

President Leeson stated an amount of \$3,400 and questioned the impact if it were cut.

Mr. Washington replied that they would have to find a way to repair equipment if needed. They would have to find a way to calibrate the scales.

Dr. Lewis noted that Kathy Halkins was very good with getting much of the equipment repaired as opposed to being replaced.

President Leeson and Mr. Washington both commented that she did a great job.

President Leeson went back to SPARK and asked about \$20,000 under "Other Professional Services."

Mr. Washington replied that part of it was associated with a summer program which was themed based and puppeteers were brought in for the students. It also was connected to agency relationships. He elaborated that there was staff development in daycares, which were associated with the district.

Dr. Lewis interjected with the comment that the figures were incorrect. He told Mr. Washington that he was not cutting \$20,000 out of a line item that was only spending \$1,000. He reviewed that the budget was for \$1,000 for "Other Professional Services", which he described. He noted that they were minor services and he didn't understand the \$20,000.

It was concluded that the \$20,000 was for summer guidance.

Director Dexter said that she would like to know the impact of the summer guidance program and asked if it was limited to high school guidance.

Dr. Lewis didn't think the hours have been impacted because they hired a number of counselors who are lower on the scale. He believed it was calculated on their new salaries as per diem. He thought it to be a realization as opposed to a cut in hours and asked them for verification.

Director Dexter said that it was in black and questioned if it was a realization then it should be in red.

Dr. Lewis agreed and stated they should review it.

President Leeson made note of another \$15,000 at the top for summer guidance.

Mr. Washington requested to make clarification regarding the summer guidance program. He said they gave the guidance counselors hours at a leadership rate, which was per diem.

Dr. Lewis asked Mr. Washington to recalculate for verification because they recently hired a number of new counselors who were lower on the salary scale.

Director Dexter inquired if they could budget out a reduction because of contractual obligations. She added that she didn't think they should be cutting hours from summer guidance and would actually advocate for more and not less, especially at the high school level. She expressed concern about the high school level with regard to scheduling.

Dr. Lewis replied that he didn't disagree with her and reiterated that it should be rechecked and verified. He emphasized that the hours cannot be reduced. It would either be a memorandum of understanding or contractual but it would be one or the other.

Mr. Gross commented that it was definitely contractual.

Director Follweiler requested further clarification on the line items for the next meeting, making a suggestion with regard to subject placement on the informational spreadsheet.

President Leeson made comment on the summer guidance issue. She knew they had spoken informally about guidance and perhaps attempting to clean it up with possibly having a system with more parental involvement. She said that it would not relieve all of the issues with changes still being made to schedules but it would assist with some of the major changes. She thought by cleaning up the process, it would make it somewhat easier on the guidance counselors during the summer months.

Director Dexter asked if it was possible to have the budget paperwork before the March 31st budget discussion. She said it was not as helpful for her to receive it on the same night of the presentation, as it would be if she had it in advance.

President Leeson stated that she believed it was on a Monday so if they could receive it as an enclosure in the Friday packet or possibly the previous Wednesday.

Dr. Lewis agreed to accommodate her request.

A question was raised from Ann Goldberg regarding Reading Recovery® budget information.

Dr. Lewis replied that Mr. Majewski prepared the document and he did not want to speak for him. He believed that he didn't make the budgetary adjustment, which meant that the total available to cut would have been A minus B (the first two blocks), which generated the figure of \$4,178,000. He believed the important numbers were in red. He would confer with Mr. Majewski and the correction would be made.

Dr. Dexter asked if Reading Recovery® was in or out of the budget. She asked for a reply in plain language.

Mrs. Katona replied that Reading Recovery® was in the budget. They had looked at the possibility of cutting a few positions but then looked at a few individuals no longer doing one-on-one interventions and rather utilized in a classroom or in some other capacity to help sustain the benefits of Reading Recovery®. She reiterated that it was not being cut out of the budget, but they were looking for better ways to sustain any benefits from the program, as well as to ensure that they better address the needs of those students who perhaps did not go through the program and still need additional assistance as they move into second or third grade. Mrs. Katona stated that Dr. LoFaso did the analysis on the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) and would also be going back to look at PSSA scores and also looking at students who discontinued the Reading Recovery program or possibly other students who would have needed the program. She stated that they were continuing to work with a redesign of how they structured interventions across the board but they were also going to continue the Reading Recovery® Program.

Dr. Lewis told Ms. Goldberg that he had an answer regarding her earlier question. He explained that the first box was the original draft with the recommended cuts of which he pulled out Reading Recovery®. The second box should have been the reinstated budgetary adjustments. He said to keep in mind that the Reading Recovery® adjustments were not in Curriculum and Instruction. If it were to be entirely cut, it would have been a handful of supplies. The Reading Recovery® cuts were reflected in Mr. Gross' budget and he believed that she was in attendance when he made his presentation.

Mr. Gross stated the five teachers were in the six percent column.

Director Follweiler commented that there was \$283,000 in the six percent column from the last meeting.

Mrs. Katona stated that the only item, which would be reinstated, would be approximately \$20,000 for supplies.

President Leeson brought attention to the statement that they were keeping the Reading Recovery® Program and would be looking at the interventions with the possibility of a few cuts. She asked if they were still considering cutting five full-time positions which was actually ten Reading Recovery® teachers.

Mrs. Katona replied that they were looking at different numbers.

Mr. Gross added that since his presentation, in addition to Mrs. Katona's committee work, they were looking at several different plans to attempt to reduce the impact on teachers. He said the question was asked at the last budget meeting as to whether it was five .5 teachers or five 1.0 equivalent teachers. They were attempting to get that to be five .5 slots, in other words, a lesser impact.

Director Follweiler commented that his budget had the \$283,000, so if she understood him correctly, he was attempting to find ways to have less impact on the students without impacting the budget.

Mr. Gross said the anticipated funding from the Department of Education would potentially cover at least a 1.0 staff member, which was very good news. He thought the teacher leader position could be fully funded.

A question was posed from the audience regarding a .8 district-wide Reading Recovery® teaching position on page 68.

Mr. Gross could not specify exactly who it was, but noted there were several district-wide Reading Recovery® positions.

An individual from the floor commented that on page 68, there were zero teachers for the 2008-2009 Career Academy Camp.

Dr. Lewis replied that it had been corrected yesterday.

Director Dexter asked what they would expect to hear at the next budget meeting.

Dr. Lewis replied that they would discuss business, special education, facilities, transportation and technology.

President Leeson reviewed that they already asked for some additional information and also thought that there had been changes made since the first discussion. She assumed that by March 31st, there would be a few more adjustments and asked if they could receive them.

Dr. Lewis responded that he would update them on everything for March 31st.

President Leeson inquired if there were any questions. She thanked everyone for their participation and for the good work done by administration regarding the proposed cuts.

Minutes prepared by Donna Wenz.