Budget-Related Questions for BOE/Administration

Proposed SHS Staffing Additions:

Unlike the class size caps at the elementary schools and the house structure at SMS, student choice in course selection is the stated driver for increased staffing needs at SHS. In order to assist PTC in understanding the proposed additions at the high school, please provide information concerning:

1. How do you know when you have reached capacity within a department? What data or metric do you use to assess whether to increase or decrease staffing (e.g., is it based on teacher course and section load, number of students assigned per teacher, number of periods available for office hours, or any other factors)?

We look at a variety of indicators by department, including historical staffing data vs. student enrollment, average class size, number and percentage of sections over 25 (for English, science, math, and social studies) or 20 (for world languages). We also take into consideration our ability to offer smaller class sizes for skills courses, as well as a variety of electives, especially in art, for example.

2. Which classes currently have the largest class sizes?

In terms of average class size, the largest numbers are in AT Macroeconomics 28.7 average/3 sections; AT Biology 28/1; Honors Geology 27/2; Honors Pre-Calculus 27/4; Biology 513 26.6/8; Calculus BC 26.5/2; Math 432 26/5.

The largest single sections are as follows: Biology 513 has sections of 31, 30, and 29; Physics 513 has sections of 30 and 29; AT Macroeconomics has sections of 30 and 29; Math 423 has one section of 29; Peacing it Together has one section of 29.

3. What is the range of class size for current math/STEAM and science classes as compared to the ranges in other departments?

We have been trying to keep our STEAM classes in the high teens, given that the students are using machinery and need intensive supervision when doing so, in addition to the layout of the space, which can accommodate up to 2 sections at a time.

Most math and science classes fall under the informal cap of 25. We exceed this cap, for example, in the beginning of the year when we overload Biology 513 sections knowing that some students will choose to go to Biology 512 during the fall semester. As mentioned in the rationale, we currently have two precalculus sections approaching 30, so rather than roll them over into oversized Calculus classes we would need an extra section there to get three classes at around 20 students.

4. How does the average class size vary based on level (e.g., skills, regular, honors, AT) as opposed to by course within a department?

There is always a focus on keeping skills classes smaller than all others, so that those students can get the extra attention they need. Otherwise, we use the aforementioned caps to guide us.

5. How are the number of class sections determined? At what point does the level of anticipated enrollment in any particular course trigger a decision to create an extra section or to reduce the number of sections and do such decisions account for trends in students moving up or dropping down a level after classes have begun?

We usually take the anticipated number of enrolled students in a course and divide by 25 to see how many sections we will need. Then we look at the bigger picture by seeing how the breakage falls among the other courses in the department, and then we make decisions as to how many sections to give to each course. Once we get to sections that are projected to be 27 or higher across multiple sections, that usually gets us trying to add a section to that course. If we have, for example, 3 sections of one course at 26 and 3 of another at 26, and we can assign another section to one of those courses, we will likely go with the lower-level course under the logic that younger students or those in a lower level will benefit more from smaller sections.

6. Pedagogically, what is the current thinking about the ideal number and the maximum number of students in one classroom, especially in lab sections where safety becomes a consideration?

We will allow enrollment to exceed the number of lab stations more easily in physics or biology courses than in chemistry courses, because the nature of some of the lab activities in chemistry includes fire and chemicals, which require greater attention to supervision and safety. Of course, the ideal is always that enrollment will not exceed the number of lab stations, but we have balanced that ideal against the reality that science teachers, who teach 3 sections each, will have lower total student loads than teachers in other subjects, so from that vantage point the tutorial load can be managed even if individual sections go above 25.

7. How will the addition of a math/STEAM teacher and a science teacher impact the student experience (e.g., more sections of the existing course offerings to reduce class size or expansion of course topics offered or both)?

The addition of a math/STEAM teacher and a science teacher will allow us to both reduce class size in existing courses and potentially add new courses, such as an app design course that would ideally be co-taught by a computer and a STEAM teacher.

8. Besides the changes contemplated by next year's draft budget, what additional future staffing needs and changes, if any, do you anticipate will result from current trends in student class choice and projected changes, if any, to state graduation requirements.

We always look for fluctuations in language enrollment among the four languages we offer, and we have asked for a contingency to allow us that flexibility if we need to add partial FTE to manage fluctuations. We also have the benefit of a recently hired teacher who is certified to teach both French and Spanish.

If students migrate from one area to another in terms of electives, we would need to address that interest by adding FTE to accommodate demand to the greatest extent possible. This does not always have a corresponding reduction in FTE in another department, because students are usually choosing that new interest over many different secondary interests, but again we monitor class sizes over time to see if there is an accrual of excess teaching power in formerly popular areas.

Facilities Maintenance and Improvements:
9. Is a new building conditions survey in the works? This work will commence in the Spring of 2020

10. What identified projects from 2015 BCS are still pending and what additional projects have been identified since that study? There are projected to be 148 items remaining on the original BCS list after this year. Other BCS type items that have been identified include continued extensive elevator repairs/replacements, HS Auditorium rigging replacement and district-wide asphalting. Other non-BCS items currently in development for further consideration include HS stage lighting upgrades, Heathcote Office renovations, HS Learning Resource Center renovations and elementary school kitchens (EW, FM and HE).

11. What is the status of the District Sustainability Committee and its efforts to explore long term cooling solutions, alternative energy sources (e.g., solar panels), environmentally friendly food service and waste disposal practices (e.g., feasibility and utility of reintroduction of dishwashers in lieu of compostable plates and utensils, composting on site), and appropriate funding sources for such projects (e.g., grants, EPC, or annual budget)? We are currently in the data-gathering stage in preparation for engaging with ConEd Solutions to explore long-term opportunities for energy savings and understanding the broadest range of viable cooling solutions possible. We anticipate this conversation getting underway this spring. We anticipate that our engagement with ConEd solutions will generate a path toward projects that incorporate many aspects of our operation, including the food service pieces.

As for alternative energy sources, we have completed a preliminary exploration regarding solar with the New York Power Authority's K Solar program. We learned that there are two major barriers to undertaking PV solar projects- NYSED's requirement to demonstrate financial payback within the 18 year window that governs capital projects, and the potential ConEd costs associated with enabling additional generation capacity. The initial assessment suggests PV solar, as the programs are currently structured, is likely not a viable project today.

12. SHS -- What is the current condition of the auditorium, in terms of functionality for existing uses, and where does the auditorium rank currently in the list of SHS facilities priorities? There are no practical limitations on the use of the auditorium however it continues to be the highest priority amongst HS Projects in development. Seating and flooring, along with rigging and stage lighting are still items that should be completed over the next couple of budget cycles and will be prioritized (all other things being equal) as such. What, if any, are the plans for changes to the LRC rooms? BBS Architects are working with the HS to re-think these spaces to better serve students' instructional needs. Plans and estimates are not yet fully developed. A-School? There are currently no active discussions regarding plans for the A-School.

13. SMS -- What, if any, are the plans for the CHOICE building? The CHOICE building is currently being used for District-wide storage including athletics. We anticipate that this will continue to be the case due to the limitations of this facility to house occupants. and Bathrooms accessible to those using the field? A plan is in development to allow controlled public access to existing MS bathrooms. Fitness center? Large group spaces? There are currently no active discussions regarding these spaces.

14. Elementary Schools -- What, if any, are the plans for kitchen/food prep areas at E, FM, and to increase capacity at H? Initial plans for these projects and others were discussed during the 2018 Bond Development. These plans were eventually put aside. The architects are now exploring other opportunities to thoughtfully provide kitchen services to these buildings. These plans are in the early stages of development.
Spaces for inter-classroom collaboration? There are not currently any architectural plans underway for new classroom spaces keeping in mind extensive learning common space was presented in by architects in the spring of 2017, but rejected due to cost considerations by the Board of Education. Playground renovation schedule? There are no short-term plans for any playground renovations and there have been no concerns brought to my attention.

Safety and Security:
15. Other than the number of hours that monitoring will occur at each of the school buildings, what additional changes are being made to the visitor management system in terms of numbers

of contracted personnel on duty at each building and admittance procedures for visitors, including practices during periods of high volume ingress/egress? Each Elementary school would have 2.0 FTE individuals, SMS 2.5 FTE (+1.5 FTE from current) and SHS 6.25 FTE (+2.25 FTE from current). Upon entering any school building, visitors, volunteers, contractors, and parents will be asked by our Safety Monitors to present a valid government-issued ID, such as a driver's license. The Safety Monitor will scan this ID using the latest in ID scanning technology. Within a few seconds, Raptor will check the visitor's information against the National Database of Registered Sex Offenders, and also cross-reference with parent-provided court records to determine whether this is a non-authorized parent or relative who has a restraining order. If a positive match occurs, District personnel will be immediately and discreetly alerted. To prevent false positives, the system has the ability to compare a photograph of the actual registered sex offender to the visitor. Once the ID has been scanned and entry is approved, the system will create a unique badge that identifies the visitor, date, time, and destination. Visitors will be required to wear this badge to be allowed entrance to the school and to proceed to their destination. They will also be required to leave through the same entrance they entered, so that the visitor badge can be returned and an accurate accounting of visitors in the building is maintained - information of particular importance in the event of an emergency evacuation.

16. What is the rationale for the specific visitor management changes being proposed? Raptor is part of a layered system of safety and security within our schools. An important aspect of keeping students and staff safe is knowing who is in our buildings at all times, and the Raptor system will enable us to do that. This system will allow us to screen visitors, contractors, and volunteers in our schools. It will provide us with a safer and more thoroughly monitored environment for our students and staff, and a quick and efficient way to welcome visitors in a manner that increases campus security.

17. How do the proposed changes account for variance in the historical practices and culture from building to building and differences of opinion within the community with respect to the desired culture and expectations? Visitor management practices are in the process of being aligned from building to building in order to match a unified District-wide approach to visitor management based on best practice. Alignment of these practices and procedures allow building staff to know that visitors are properly screened providing all of us with a safer school environment.

18. How much of the proposed increase in contracted safety and security services pertains to services that address vehicular traffic patterns, parking issues, and pedestrian safety on and around the district campuses? Safety Monitors not assigned to a main entrance(s) will be available and be expected to assist with traffic, student and pedestrian safety during the course of the school day.

19. How will contracted security personnel be used for purposes of traffic safety monitoring on Campuses? Safety Monitors may be used to assist with auto, student and pedestrian/parent traffic during morning drop-off and/or afternoon dismissal depending on building needs.

Transportation:

20. What percentage of students eligible for district busing to/from each school are availing themselves regularly of that service? Approximately 58% on any given day with the lowest percent being the HS (30%). SMS is approximately 70%, HE 70%, QR 80% and FM 83%.

21. Are there any discernible trends in traffic volume (e.g., by # students parking on or nearby SHS campus or number of cars proceeding through each campus at high volume pick-up/drop off times? We have not noted any discernible uptick from historical trends other than during the recent construction projects.

22. Do you recommend or anticipate budgetary needs associated with undertaking a district-wide analysis of transportation routes, costs of changing mileage eligibility, ridership levels and trends, and efficiencies that could be realized? Not at this time.

23. Do current bus routes account for the differing seating and storage capacity needs for bus riders based on size/age of students and their carry-ons? No they do not.

Counseling and Psychology Services and Socio-Emotional Support:

24. Inclusion classes are now concentrated more heavily in some elementary schools than others.

Besides administrative work such as testing and reporting, will the additional district-wide psychologist also be used for the purpose of alleviating caseload in buildings having higher concentrations of classified or need-intensive students? Currently, we have additional Speech, OT and PT in schools with ICT classes where needed and our behaviorist is also running a social skills program at QRS for the ICT cohorts. Whenever we move additional needs into a building we assure the regular support services in the building are not compromised. With the addition of a large incoming K group, we will adjust support services in whichever school they are assigned.

Curriculum and Professional Development:

25. In light of Arthur Levine's recent presentation, assuming that we are currently in phase one of the digital revolution, what should our schools be teaching and how? What will that mean for budgeting for staffing and professional development going forward?

In Scarsdale, we align with Arthur Levine's emphasis on teaching creative and critical thinking skills and the need for continually providing authentic and meaningful learning experiences for students. The implications of our digital revolution means that we move well beyond technological skills, and focus on the skills and dispositions that will prepare our students for a complex, global and ever-shifting career/life landscape. Scarsdale is a learning environment that is dedicated to making structural and instructional changes to meet these evolving educational needs of our students. We do this through ongoing professional development that is progressive, differentiated and meaningful for educators. Our current professional development model supports a combination of content-specific and pedagogy-focused learning and allows for various and flexible means of teacher access. Educators have opportunities to attend workshops and conferences, work with outside and internal professional developers and mentors, enroll in classes through the Scarsdale Teachers Institute (STI) and engage in peer learning through content and grade specific planning times. In addition, educators have access to grants through the Center for Innovation (CFI) to fuel and fund projects and programs. As always, we respond to modern and rigorous learning standards across the disciplines while nurturing opportunities for classroom innovation (making, design thinking, technology infusion) and problem based learning. An essential part of this process is the purposeful *program improvement* and curriculum design that is built into our school year. Every summer, through district support, educators dedicate time to collaboratively revise, reform, and innovate existing curriculum and instructional practices. This process is aligned with the evolving needs of students and often involves outside expert mentors, cross grade and discipline collaboration, professional texts, and/or digital resources. The alignment of professional development and program improvement is illustrated nicely by the recent work in design thinking, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), interdisciplinary learning, STEAM, global competencies, wellness, performance-based assessments and the development of social entrepreneurs. By design, we are built to be a flexible organization that responds creatively to the educational needs of all our students. The depth, range and richness of this model depends on the community's ongoing willingness to support this vision. The approval of a STEAM Coordinator is a recent example.

26. Are there any plans to revisit/reassess FLES, particularly in light of the changes made to the program to begin it in second rather than first grade?

Edgar McIntosh is working with Annie Barron at the middle school language and Shaun Johnson as FLES Coordinator to monitor and assess the impact of the FLES shifts.

27. Do you foresee any increases to the elementary school PE schedule to satisfy NYS requirements and, if so, what will need to be sacrificed?

This will be addressed when the district re-examines the elementary school schedules. Our goal will be to address the academic, emotional and physical needs of our students in light of the NYS mandates. While these mandates are not new, we are exploring multiple ways to address them.