

Questions from the Marathon Budget Public Forum February 2, 2022

Academics

How has our past performance been the last 10yrs, 5yrs to Date? Increase or decrease?

What are the numbers?

- In 2012-2013, the 3-8 ELA and math assessments changed. Student tests scores across the state dropped dramatically. Over the past 5 years, on average, our NYS 3-8 ELA and Math scores in Marathon have started to increase. Over the past 10 years our NYS regents exam results, on average, have stayed approximately the same. Please visit <https://data.nysed.gov/> if you wish to see each year's exam results.

How are we working to increase our attendance at the High School level?

- Each student absence receives phone calls, personalized letters, and is monitored weekly by the Pupil Support Team. This team works with students on developing goals for their future and appropriate steps here at the Jr-Sr level to achieve those goals. Additionally, through getting students' involved in extracurricular activities, students find greater links to the school environment, beyond their normal schedule.

How are you implementing the new reading intervention programs?

- In grades K-6, the new reading intervention program is being used in our Tier 3 Academic Intervention Services (AIS) classes. In grades 7-12, the new reading intervention program is being used in our newly created reading courses.

Describe peer tutoring. Is it done after school? Does it focus on ELA and math?

- Peer tutoring happens during the school day when tutors and students receiving assistance have free periods in common. It also can occur afterschool on specific days. It focuses on ELA, math, and other subject areas in which students will have required Regents exams.

Can we hear more about tutoring? There are so many children that could benefit from that. How do we get our children involved?

- Peer tutoring is currently occurring at the junior/senior high school level. Reach out to your child's Guidance Counselor for more information on peer tutoring.

Besides supplies, why are most of the tax dollars supporting only 7-12. Can't more programs and support be offered to the up and coming generation which is a good foundation for the young adults?

- Tax dollars are used to keep class sizes low at the elementary school and used to support academic intervention services. In addition to the supplies being purchased for students in grades UPK-6, software programs, technology devices, reading intervention programs, reading curriculum materials, and summer enrichment programs are being utilized by grant funding.

Why are we spending funding on longer summer programs for the kids to have fun in the afternoon. shouldn't that funding be spent more on after school programs now to help us make those ELA and math increases for next year and get our children on track.

- The extended summer school program being implemented over the 2022 and 2023 summers, with the usage of grant funding, is to provide students with additional experiences outside of the focal areas of English Language Arts and Math. Our summer school program will be extended by two hours each day for the 4-week program to provide our students enrichment activities, learning, and experiences that will be connected to and go beyond the classroom focus of English Language Arts and Math. This summer we will be working with the Cornell Cooperative Extension's Ag in the Classroom program. This is a tremendous opportunity for students which will hopefully increase attendance.

How are we supporting students who have fallen behind because of COVID and virtual Learning?

- It starts with high quality, classroom instruction (tier 1). We have supported teachers with professional development to improve instruction in the classroom. Academic intervention instruction providers and TA/Aide provide additional support. Formative and summative assessments are given to drive instruction. Differentiation in the classroom is used to meet the needs of our students. Peer tutoring will be offered during school hours for additional academic support services for students in grades 7-12.
- This summer orientation programs, enrichment programs, and ITP (individualized transition plans) were created to reacclimate Jr-Sr HS students to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year. We have also introduced structured study halls for personalized, daily attention as students continue the transition. Our teachers work with students on a case by case basis for extenuating circumstances in these unique times.

Budget

Are there any plans to increase support staff for special needs students?

- The district has evaluated the need for extra staffing and has made adjustments to staffing or scheduling when possible.

Has the district considered compensation for the current staff overload in the area of special education?

- It has been considered in some cases.

How much is our enrollment down? How is our spending tracking to our enrollment?

- Our enrollment was 735 in 2011. Our enrollment was 637 in 2020. Today, our enrollment is back up to 723. This is largely due to graduating a few very small senior classes, bringing in a large kindergarten and bringing back two UPK classes. Our expenditures have continued to increase due to the continued need to educate the students we have. Class sizes average 17 per room but fluctuate depending on the class, especially at the

junior/senior high school level. Some classes in specialized areas are smaller, allowing Marathon to offer more elective and college level classes.

How many total new positions are we putting in the budget this year? Online looks like 9 new positions.

- 5 positions (Elementary enrichment teacher - unable to fill this year, social emotional coordinator, COVID nurse, executive secretary, additional elementary teacher)

How many positions are going to go away?

- All of the above positions are ending at the end of the grant. The elementary teacher will continue the position through attrition (filling a position when another teacher retires).

If the position is leaving because of the grant, someone is retiring, then the one in the grant funded position will slide into the retiree position?

- Yes.

We are going to increase the budget again once the grant money is gone?

- Our current budget will remain constant through the term of the grant.

What options do we have to NOT accept the American Rescue Plan Grant money.

- The American Rescue Grant was provided to school districts to help pay for COVID-related items that were never an issue in the past. This is why the grant focused on preventative measures (such as cleaning, masking, and extra staffing for social distancing) as well as learning loss, after school instruction, and summer instruction (which included programming and staffing). Our district could not afford to cover the additional costs of COVID or begin to help mitigate learning loss without these additional funds. The district would not have been able to resume in-person learning nor provide students with the technology needed to conduct remote learning.

What rules and regulations, present and future is our district agreeing to by accepting the American Rescue Plan Grant funds?

- The district attests that we will adhere to the rules and regulations set forth by the federal and state governments. These are the same rules that we must abide by for any funding the district accepts, including state and federal funding which is provided to the district during our regular budget cycle.

Have you received the Federal grant money already? And is it one lump sum or is it given over the course of 3 years?

- *We do not receive one lump sum. Once we submit our plan to utilize each portion of the grant is approved. We then receive 10% of the amount up front to get started. We must then submit financial reports to get reimbursed for all amounts above that.*

Are you going to follow the mandates to receive the grant?

- Yes.

How much money do you get for each student at this school?

- For the 2021-2022 school year - \$11,919 per student

Where were the reserves 3 years ago?

- There is a plan for using the reserves responsibly. Reserves will be reviewed during the March 2nd Board meeting.

Once our reserves are gone, how are we going to cover that?

- The district has no plan to reduce the reserves to zero.

Has the State Comptroller stated that the school district has overfunded some of their Reserves?

- Yes, in an audit of the district in 2017 the State Comptroller's report noted that they felt that 3 district reserves were overfunded. They recommended that the district create a 5 year plan to utilize the reserves that we have. We have done that and update the plan annually.

Did the Comptrollers give you suggestions on how you can reduce those reserves to get them in line with what the accounting practices should be?

- No, they left it up to the district to create the plan.

Do they take a look at your plan?

- When the plan was created the District submitted it to the Comptroller's office. They did not contact us directly with comments on the plan. It is our hope that they review the annual updates and monitor our reserves to make sure we are adhering to the plan.

Are you in line with respect to that plan to reduce those inappropriate fund balances or reserves to a level which the State says you should be?

- Yes

Has the budget been closely reviewed line by line for any opportunities to reduce spending?

- The budget is reviewed each year line by line to determine where costs can be reduced.

What is transportation aid for buses?

- 90%

Do you purchase 4 buses per year?

- Yes, upon voter approval.

How many buses are in the Marathon fleet?

- 21

How is the Elementary enrichment position going to be filled?

- We will advertise for the position in the Spring, in hopes of filling it for this fall.

Are you keeping the 2nd section of UPK? If so, is it funded by taxpayers?

- Yes we are keeping the second section. Over the next two years, it will be funded through ARP grant funds.

SRO, is that for JR/SR School only? Or second one for Appleby? If funded, one SRO would cover both buildings.

- If an SRO is part of next year's budget, the SRO would cover both buildings.