

August 24, 2023

Blog – Budgetary Staff Curriculum Changes

Last week, I discussed the Athletic budget and the changes that were made to this budget because of the failed referendum. This week, I would like to address some of the staff curricular changes which were made to the budget. First, I think that it is important for you to know that I place a high value on the staff that work in the District and will do whatever I can to preserve their positions from one year to the next. If an individual has done everything that I have asked of them, then it is my job to do everything I can to ensure that they have a job with the District in the future. However, I do not hold the same loyalty to positions. If a position is vacated by an employee, especially in times of budget reduction, then I will work closely with the building principals and other District administrative personnel to determine whether or not that position should be added back into the budget. It may be that a different position could be of better use to the students in our District or it might be that we can rearrange existing staff so that this position can be eliminated and thus help reduce our deficit.

The decision to eliminate positions is never easy. When the building principals, District administrative staff and the Board discussed what positions needed to be eliminated they first looked at what positions were vacant because of either retirements or resignations. This allowed them to keep individuals employed who were still working for the District. The staffing changes that were made at the District Office, the Elementary School and Junior/Senior High School were as follows:

District Office:

- 1) The Director of Communications position was eliminated. The duties of this position were then divided up among existing positions.
- 2) A maintenance position and a part-time custodial position were eliminated. The part-time custodian resigned and the maintenance position was cut from the budget.
- 3) The food service department cut one position and reduced the total number of hours the kitchen is in operation.
- 4) One Administrative Assistant position was eliminated at the Junior/Senior High School because of the resignation of the person who held Registrar's position at the District Office. The Administrative Assistant at the Junior/Senior High School was transferred to the Registrar's position and her position was eliminated.
- 5) The District originally had four technology integration specialists and this number was reduced to two. The other two individuals who held these positions resigned.
- 6) The District had employed two building substitute teachers – one for the Elementary School and one for the Junior/Senior High School. Both of these positions were eliminated from the budget. The person who was the Elementary School's long-term substitute was hired to fill one of the vacant elementary teaching positions.

Elementary School:

- 1) One third grade teaching position was cut from the budget. This reduced the number of sections from four to three, which raised the average class size of each class. Three elementary teachers resigned from the District and two of the positions were filled – one

with an individual who had served as a building substitute and one who was hired from outside the District.

- 2) The Elementary School Counselor position was eliminated when this individual resigned to take a position in another school district.

Junior/Senior High School:

- 1) One math teaching position was eliminated from the Junior/Senior High School after the person holding this position resigned from the District. The Junior/Senior High School still has 4.5 math teachers and the classes originally taught by the vacant position were either reassigned or combined with other math classes. Thus, similar to the Elementary School this reduction resulted in increasing teacher loads for our remaining math instructors and increased class sizes.

In addition, the District also had to significantly reduce the non-staff budgets, such as professional development, supplies, materials and equipment. As I have stated in my past blogs, none of these reductions were made lightly and all of them will have an impact on the District. I hope this explanation will reveal some of the thought processes that went into the staffing reductions. The Board and Administrative Team tried to minimize the impact that these cuts would have to the staff members that chose to stay and work with our students during these difficult economic times.

In the very near future, the Board will be working on what should be included in a referendum question to be presented to the public on April 2, 2024. In my future blogs, I will be asking for your feedback on what you feel you would like the Board to consider. Your opinions matter and we do want to hear from you so that going forward, we can make the best decisions possible for our students, staff and community.