

Questions/Comments for Bethel Local Schools on Budget Deficit

Listed are the comments or questions concerning the Budget Deficit that the board has received as of 2/28/11 either via email, phone or note cards at the public meeting. Every effort has been made to list all the comments or questions submitted.

Bus/ Transportation

1. Combine k-8 and only bus them.

We receive \$211,000 from the state for bus services we presently provide. That funding is based on the number of students in K-12 & the number of miles driven per day. Any reduction in the # of students we transport results in a reduction of funding that we receive from the state.

2. Revise bus route

3. Is the school utilizing computer bus routing transportation software? If not, why not? Programs are out here that are not that expensive or involved or can pool with other schools with these types of programs. These programs can cover maintenance and replacement suggestions also on the equipment. *These programs are extremely expensive. The cost is based on the number of students, but Vandalia-Butler purchased one and it cost them \$24,000 the first year and \$4,000 each year thereafter.*

4. Is there a savings if k-12 run on the same schedule 7:30-2:25 (or 8:30 to 3:15)? How much in fuel costs would be saved? We did it in the 1970's here @ Bethel.

5. Bus Routes- Could we change the schedule and only bus students k-8 and eliminate high school bus Routes?

6. As long as the PTO budget permits, we would be willing to help out on transportation costs for field trips. I talked to Karen Newman this morning and she is going to get me the amount the school pays for gas for field trips (I told her I knew she was extremely busy right now and that this request could wait until after tonight's meeting and when things slow down.

We are investigating this option.

7. Busing-eliminate HS. Rework system of rewarding field trips, OT, etc.

8. It is my understanding that the school cannot charge the students for the cost of transportation on field trips but is the school permitted to charge the students to help defray the cost of salaries for the bus drivers on field trips?

Students cannot be charged for any transportation costs during the school day.

Staff

10. Volunteers to teach art, gym, music if we need to cut (technology).

11. 8% Pay cut across the Board-Admin thru faculty. 3 years no jobs cut.

12. Merit raises for faculty and admin., not guaranteed automatic increases.

This will be negotiated at the appropriate time.

13. Earn your raise

14. Most people in this community have suffered some kind of pay cuts. If we are concerned about this - District, Everyone involved needs to "Tighten Their Belts."

This is a negotiated item. We begin negotiations on March 15th.

15. Utilize "laid off" personnel as substitutes and not outside staff as we do now.

This is a good possibility.

16. Contract of janitorial- will money increase for outside services with loss of position

Actually, we have reduced the services and cost of the outsourcing company.

17. Co-op tech teacher

18. To make reductions equitable I suggest raising the employee contribution for health benefits to 25% of total cost.

19. Could PTO pay half of Deputy Harnish's fee and a fundraiser pay for the other half? When do we lose the ability to procure his services? July, Aug, Sept?

This option has been discussed. We are looking at other funding streams. The service is over after school is out.

20. Note: Sad to see no teacher's offer any solutions- maybe they already have to their supervisors? Where do they see cuts and savings?
21. Copy Room Person- could the work done by this person be split between remaining secretaries?
Using secretaries is the current plan for next year.
22. Look at insurance for spouses of employees. If spouse is covered under plan at his/her work, they could take their work insurance rather than ours (could cut costs?)
This is a negotiated item. We begin negotiations on March 15th.
23. Treasurer's office?
We have will reassign duties after the reduction of a secretary.
24. Eliminate superintendent's secretary. Easily absorb by others not essential.
We are eliminating a secretary, but the work of the superintendent's secretary is essential.
25. ½ time position for Home Ec. and Shop and Computers
26. Reduce cost of subs-Too many teachers/staff missing work.
27. Release full time tech support w/benefits keep part time tech support w/p benefits.
28. Re-negotiate night time custodial services.
The night time custodial service contract has been adjusted
29. If workers comp has gone up- re-negotiate.
We are in a consortium that negotiates for us along with many other school districts.
30. Keep Technical (Computer teachers)
31. Keep high profile- long term educators
32. Make effort to keep Deputy Harnish
33. Has the Board considered asking for volunteers to handle various jobs, school requests, etc.?
34. Share art/tech teacher with other districts with same problem or have art/technology teachers work part time.
35. Lessen professional development hours of collaborate with other districts
36. Art Mobile: contract a traveling art teacher to come to school to teach art to schools.
<http://columbusartmobile.com/wp/>
37. Offer early retirement for near-retirement teachers and hire on newer teachers
We had a third-party vendor analyze our staff and an early buyout would not benefit us at this time.
38. Teachers take a two year pay freeze
This is a negotiated item. We begin negotiations on March 15th.
39. Get rid of flex spending accounts for administrators
40. Employees pay in more for healthcare (I am not seven sure that can be done)
This is a negotiated item. We begin negotiations on March 15th.
41. Offer incentive to staff that do not take use employee healthcare family plan
This is a negotiated item. We begin negotiations on March 15th.
42. Reduce salary of admin and staff (I am not even sure that can be done)
This is a negotiated item. We begin negotiations on March 15th.
43. Would love to know what teachers have suggested and what they are willing to do PERSONALLY?
44. As each of us has cut back where is their master plan or their level of commitment?
45. Reduce the BOE income.
We did this at the Organization Meeting in January. However, it does not take effect until the election or re-election of board members. Board members have already committed to donate 12 meeting earnings, after taxes, back to the general fund.
46. Can the board become volunteers and give up meeting salaries? How much in one year would that save?
47. Deputy Harnish funding outside of budget'
48. The current economic issues facing the public school employees are the same as those private sector employees have been dealing with for the last 5 years. This audience is full of private sector employees who have been faced with increases in healthcare costs, decreases in hours, temporary or permanent layoffs, pay freezes, and decreases in pay up to 25%. I am saddened that this economic trend has now hit our school systems which are so important to all of us. It is time for the public school employees to band together to save each other. Excluding employees within 3 years of retirement eligibility, has the board considered an across the board decrease in salaries of 2-3% to prevent the loss of these

positions? Has the board presented such a proposal to the union and if so what was the union's response?

This is a negotiated item. We begin negotiations on March 15th.

49. Poll expertise of community (have science night put on by scientists in the community, have local artists share their expertise with groups of students.)

Sports

50. Save athletics (pay to play) or we will have kids leave.

We are not eliminating extra-curricular or co-curricular. We will be instituting an "activity fee" to offset the cost of these programs.

51. Home Football Games, move to Saturdays, won't need lights. No night outdoor games.

52. How much would be saved if all coaches would become "volunteers"?

This is asking a great deal because of the time spent by coaches.

53. Does the new plan make room for athletics and athletic director?

The athletic director duties will be handled by a supplemental contract. Athletics are still a vital part of the educational experience.

54. As I mentioned in a previous email, I think the Board should seriously consider some type/ level of pay for play. The students in the elementary already pay for participating in a number of sports. I'm not sure how much or to what extent the junior high and high school students are required to contribute.

We will be instituting an "activity fee" to offset the cost of these programs.

55. Charge admission for Pee Wee football games and B-Ball basketball games and turn the money over to the operating fund (to cover electricity, fuel, etc.) Even if \$2 per adult and #1 for children this would add up.

56. "Rent" the concession stand and the cafeteria to the Boosters. Again, to cover electricity, fuel, etc.

Everything the Boosters make is for support of the school. We could charge them, but that would less their ability to help in other ways.

57. How will going to pay to pay affect our budget? *The "activity fee" will generate about \$50,000 depending on how many students participate.*

Property/Maintenance

58. I will volunteer to clean.

Unfortunately, volunteers are not always reliable. The Boosters are having a difficult time in finding volunteers for the concession stand.

59. Sell Lots off on Property north of school.

This is not feasible at this time.

60. Grounds Maint. Cost-Allow present staff to mow, mulch, etc

Present system is more efficient.

61. AG program on N-Property

Mr. Hoover tried to get the FFA program restarted, but it could not be supported.

62. Asset liquidation-Extensive property

63. Energy deregulation

64. Cleaning Company/ Custodial Services?

65. Eliminate night cleaning. Close the building completely on Sundays to save employee overtime. Energy and cleaning costs.

66. Have we shopped around for cheaper TV/Cable/Internet provider? Can we save per month?

67. Get rid of TV? Cable service in the lunchroom/high school area?

68. What is the status of the land next to high school?

69. Switching energy providers. Duke energy is aggressively searching for customers in Miami Co.

70. The printer I previously mentioned to you charges .05 per copy on white paper and .08 a copy on color paper. Considering staff cost, machines, repairs etc. this might be a cost-saving factor.

Our present machines cost us .00584 per copy for black and white and .0815 for color. We rarely use color copying because of the excess cost. We feel our copy costs are pretty good right now.

71. I really don't see how the school can get along with only one custodian. The three schools require a lot of maintenance and help with various items/projects.

72. Send printing to outside source. PTO uses and my non-profit organization uses World Digital Imaging. Copies are .02 a print <http://wdi-whq.com/>
Our present machines cost us .00584 per copy for black and white and .0815 for color. We rarely use color copying because of the excess cost. We feel our copy costs are pretty good right now.
73. Develop a community service requirement. Empty trash other events have kids do it.
74. Outsource services (treasury etc)
75. Put the \$1M property that was purchased without public consent attached to the HS parking lot on the market.

Curriculum

76. Is physical education and music required at the elementary level?
77. Do not go to every other day kindergarten education of kids major affected.
This would save about \$17,000. I have met with Kindergarten teachers and 1st Grade teachers to discuss this possibility. The teachers shared with me that this would not be as educationally sound as what we presently are doing or all day kindergarten every day. I have not yet made a decision in this area.
78. Why cut high school tech over elementary music?
79. Have we explored the CTC programs for shop and home Ec.? Where these become career programs and can be funded by the CTC instead of Bethel?
The MVCTC was contacted and there is no funding stream to help us at this time.
80. Give the books to the Economics class tell them how to run the business let the students tell us how to run the business
81. Pay for electives
82. Extra fee for "extra" classes
83. To do all day kindergarten and not have any group getting few days than another. Children go every other day school is in session. Not certain days.
84. Music programs any fat there?
85. Instead of having the teachers copy all the worksheets, would it be feasible to have the parents purchase the workbooks at the beginning of each year or add an additional amount to the school fees to cover the cost of printing all the worksheet that are distributed to the students.
86. Institute "oldest and only program" or email correspondence instead of papers sent home etc. (Only send home info to oldest children in family or only children in family)
87. Local business sponsors some of our programs.

Financial/Other

88. Why haven't we planned ahead and budgeted for the worst case scenario from the state?
89. How will we be impacted by losing open enrollment students by providing a bare minimum state education? Lots of talk among parents about applying for open enrollment elsewhere.
90. What would it take to become a Charter School and is it possible (long term aid)
91. More income per students?
92. We are a non-traditional school.
93. Could we maintain the integrity of the school?
94. Is there an appeal process that may be pursued to change our position with the Board of Education (Ohio) so we can and should be more competitive, (Not with Oakwood?)
95. Why as a board did it get this bad and why did the board not take action if this has been happening for over 20 years?
96. Can we do an emergency Levy and how soon do monies come in?
Whether we pass a levy in May, August or November, the collections on these levies do not begin until January 1 of the following year.
97. Use Capital Funds for items that will reduce cost. Build revenue. Energy grants.
We are submitting a HB 264 energy grant to the state for approval for work to be done this summer that will save us at least \$54,000 a year in our general fund.
98. Develop a committee to audit the business. They can audit the school as a business not as educators. It would be volunteers. Back ground checks, letters of confidentiality.

99. Newsletter makes it electronic, put it at banks or restaurants, big Mikes

The Mikes is a good idea. We are making our newsletter electronic on our website. We used to send out 2,600 copies, but now we only send out about 177 to those individuals who have requested it because they have no Internet.

100. Base on my observations tonight I am not confident that the administration can correct the financial situation. Outside help is needed. I am will to help I run a multimillion dollar business and can assist free of charge.

101. Main concern is as why the voters were led to believe the income tax was going to take care of all our problems and nothing was mentioned about the upcoming cutbacks and changes. The board had to have some knowledge of the expenditures and foreseeable lack of income from all of the business, unemployment and knowing foreclosures with decreasing sales. Or does everyone have their heads buried in the sand and no business or financial sense?

102. Can solicited private funds be put into the general operating funds?

The Board will welcome donations and we will accept them at the next regular Board Meeting.

103. Get a performance audit from the state auditor for suggestions as to where to cut budget.

We are auditing every year. If you want to see the last two years, go to

<http://audits.auditor.state.oh.us/Request.aspx?d=M0111%2fBsK6E9t8WBNO17cg%3d%3d&e=ZzIOGmp9r9TPI7zO3RPhb03UZWfpPZYI6Xrsmmf4Aw%3d&p=Vop%2b09%2bizUVwvZC6KeSF1w%3d%3d>

104. Use Miami County grants when needed-Levy on Ballot

105. Fundraiser? Can we host a Bethel fundraiser in which community members can donate money toward the school? Buy a brick program (Bethel community members can buy a brick that we can use to line the front walk of the school. The brick could have their name on it or at least a list of all brick donors can be listed on a plaque.

106. Accept donations from community members

The Board will welcome donations and we will accept them at the next regular Board Meeting.

107. Contributions. If each house hold in Bethel, including those in Huber limits but in Bethel school district, contributed (say) \$100, how much would that bring in? Could such contribu5tins be tax deductible? Could we set up a "payment plan" option or a "commitment agreement" permitting people to budget for a and/ or possibly wait for income tax returns.

108. School lunches. There are 541 kids in K-6. Subtract; say 100, for K. if 2/3 of the elementary (293) buy lunch and lunch prices were raised .50, which would result in over \$2900 a month... for the elementary alone!!

We have looked at lunch prices and we are lower than most schools in the conference.

However, food service is to operate on a self sustaining budget and it is not connected to the general fund. The only way it would affect the general fund would be if we needed to supplement the budget at the end of the year because it was operating in the red.

109. Collect 2011-12 school fees before the end of 2010-11 year.

Fee collected are to be spent the year that they are collected. These fees are in a different account than the general fund. These funds are located in a rotary account that pays for materials needed by the student according to their schedule or grade level.