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Butler School District 53

Board Report

A news report of the Sept. 12, 2016 Board of Education meeting

Board adopts 2016-17 budget

The Board of Education adopted a \$19.8 million budget for 2016-17 after holding a public hearing and publicly displaying the budget for 30 days.

The goal is to adopt a budget that balances revenues and expenses, maintains the highest AAA bond rating, continues the strong educational program that the community expects, and maintains healthy reserves, said Business Manager Dr. Sandra Martin.

In its operating funds, the District receives 90 percent of its revenue through property taxes, 3 percent from state revenue and less than 1 percent from federal revenue. The remainder is from fees, tuition and earnings on investments. Revenues, unfortunately, have remained stagnant because the formula for determining any rise in property tax revenue is tied to the rate of inflation. The upcoming levy will be determined on a Consumer Price Index (CPI) that is less than .07 percent. That will mean a squeeze on the budget and continued prudent financial planning.

Some additional costs in the budget this year are for legal fees, an increase to two permanent substitutes because of family leaves, a 13 percent increase in special education costs, an 11 percent increase in insurance premiums and a 4.5 percent increase in transportation costs.

Salary costs will rise about \$152,929 this year due to pay increases and a slight increase in the number of teachers. This year, there are 51.53 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, slightly above last year's 51.19 FTE. Related to that is a rise in student enrollment over the last five years.

The budget also includes a planned deficit in order to pay for \$3.3 million in capital improvements to the two schools. Summer work included building a safety vestibule off the Butler Junior High gym, painting and adding casework and cabinetry to Brook Forest School, regrading the fields and repairing drainage issues.

Martin said the District will continue its scrutiny of the educational needs each year, enrollment and preventative infrastructure improvements in order to keep costs low, save about \$500,000 a year for future facility repairs and live within its revenue stream.

Sixth grade leadership program planned

Sixth graders will learn more study and leaderships skills, self awareness and communication skills in a unique four-day voluntary pilot program called Sixth Grade Success Summit. Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom and Butler Principal Amy Read said the school is partnering with Quantum Learning to offer the program beginning in October. The program offers strategic training to help students make gains both academically and personally, they said. Students will learn to think outside the box, become more active listeners, learn strategies for self motivation and learn how their brain works in order to boost learning and retention. Outcomes include personal success, increased motivation, raising grades and better leadership, said Wennstrom. Sixth grade is a critical time for growth and laying the foundation for future success. The cost will be borne by families.

Guidelines for parents reviewed

The Board reviewed a draft of Effective Parent Communications Norms, a document that outlines how parents and the school should work together as partners in the educational process. The document, which was reviewed by teachers, the PTO and the District Leadership Team, details expectations for parent involvement and teacher communications, a parent code of conduct and appropriate steps for conflict resolution.

The Board also reviewed a related document, Volunteer and Visitor Guidelines, which is a blueprint for volunteers and visitors on school grounds. The document summarizes the importance of volunteers and the PTO, guidelines for ensuring safety, communicating, visiting the school, maintaining confidentiality and using technology. The documents will be adopted at the Board meeting in October.

Transportation, new staff, capital improvements

In other news, the Board:

- Approved renewal of medical insurance benefits for employees with Blue Cross Blue Shield for the 2016-17 school year

- Heard an update on changes in bus transportation compared to last year from Butler Junior High Assistant Principal Marybeth Marinier. Earlier, the Board had given the go-ahead to add two additional routes if necessary – one at each school – in order to cut down the time a student is on the bus. The routes were warranted due to enrollment increases and allowed the District to stay within its one-hour time guideline for a child to be on a bus. The changes will cost an additional \$82,000 to the District. The Board may look at changes in bus fees in the spring.

- Heard a report from Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair Lou Paskalides. He summarized summer preventative maintenance testing and work and the summer construction projects. Most construction work is completed, including installation of security camera systems, painting of Brook Forest, installation of cabinetry and casework at Brook Forest and refinishing of the junior high gym floor. The Butler Junior High safety vestibule is about 60 percent complete.

- Approved the appointment of Suzanne Ferry as a Teacher Assistant at Brook Forest,

- Approved the resignation of Katie Adler, as a Teacher Assistant, also at Brook Forest.

- Welcomed Brook Forest new principal Jason Bednar and new staff to the school, commenting on the high caliber of the new faculty and staff.

- Heard that Dolphin Station, the parent-paid before and after school child care program, developed by the Oak Brook Park District in conjunction with the school district, is off to a successful start. It is held at Brook Forest.

- Heard about electives that were added to the Butler Junior High schedule, including music ensemble, photography and math electives among others.

Board Calendar

Sept. 29 District Technology Committee - 3:45 p.m.
Oct. 4 District Leadership Team - 4:00 p.m.
Oct. 6 Buildings and Grounds Committee - 7 a.m.
Oct. 17 Policy Committee - 5 p.m.
Oct. 17 Board of Education Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
Administrative Center

School Calendar

Oct. 7 Parent Visitation Day, BF
Oct. 7 School Improvement Day, 11:50 a.m.
student dismissal
Oct. 10 Columbus Day - No School
Oct. 13 PTO Meeting - 6:30 p.m.