

School Board Work Session

Monday, March 15, 2021 6:45 PM
Online

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Update on Steering Committee and possible direction on next steps for the Steering Committee

2. Budget Reductions

4. ADJOURN

**Le Sueur-Henderson Public Schools
Budget Update for 2021-2022 School Year
February 15, 2021**

Regarding the 2021-2022 Budget:

As we prepare for the 2021-2022 school year, the Le Sueur-Henderson Public School District is projecting a \$700,000 deficit when comparing revenues to expenses within our Unassigned General Fund for this upcoming budget year. The following commentary is provided to give context to this projection as well as to explain the budget challenges the District is facing.

Enrollment

2018-2019 = 1,024

2019-2020 = 983

2020-2021 = 936

Since the 18-19 school year we've experienced a drop of 88 students or 8.6% of our total enrollment. The State's basic funding formula provides for \$6,567 per student which equates to a loss in basic general formula revenue of approximately \$578,000 (88 students x \$6,567) for our district. To put this in perspective, the District received roughly \$108,000 last year for the additional operating referendum that our taxpayers voted to support in the fall of 2017 when the District asked for an additional \$100 per pupil unit (student). The majority of all our revenue streams are tied to enrollment levels and have experienced similar percentage level decreases. We're anticipating enrollment to continue its decline heading into the 21-22 school year as we see are larger senior classes graduate with smaller kindergarten class sizes coming in as an offset.

The COVID19 pandemic has had great impact on enrollment levels statewide as experienced here locally. The State of Minnesota has reported a reduction of 12,600 students statewide, saving \$118 million within their budget outlook. Our District's enrollment projection for the adopted 2020-2021 budget was anticipated at 964 students and our current seat counts have us a 936. This decrease of 28 students will be directly felt in this current 20-21 fiscal year.

Compensatory Revenue

The District is also being forced to overcome a reduction in its Compensatory Revenue allocation of \$103,000 for the 21-22 school year. In the spring of 2020, the USDA approved the extension of the summer food program for all districts. This means that all students eat for free through the 2020-2021 school year. This has been a great program and one that has benefited families struggling under COVID19. However, this has also reduced the incentive for our families to apply for educational benefits and we've seen our free and reduced numbers fall drastically as a result. The compensatory revenue calculation is directly tied to these numbers which have driven the sharp decline in funding. This is a statewide issue.

2020-2021 Budget Deficit & COVID Funding

The budget approved for the 2020-2021 school year calls for our unassigned portion of our General Fund to deficit spend by \$250,013. This deficit is only anticipated to increase given the additional COVID related enrollment drop and our revised budget to be presented in the spring will be reflective of this. This deficit doesn't go away with the start of the 21-22 school year and will only add to any needed adjustments for the following school year.

The District has received much needed funding related to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for this current fiscal year. However, these funds are meant to supplement, not supplant, our operations. Meaning, these funds aren't to be used to fund existing operations and won't provide much relief to our current budget deficit for the 20-21 school year.

The district has been informed that we're to be receiving a second round of COVID related federal funding to aid operations with generous early estimate amounts. This funding is being referred to as ESSER II and GEER II by MDE. It was recently announced that these funds would not have the same supplement vs supplant restrictions as the first round. This would mean these funds could be used to subsidize many of our existing expenses. However, this is a one-time funding event and would only create compounded deficit issues in the years after the spending down of these allocations if done in a manner to subsidize existing budget gaps.

2019-2020 Fiscal Year

2019-2020 was favorable financially to the District's General Fund. The District's unassigned fund balance increased by \$174,000 as we experienced budget savings in several areas. Utilities, delayed technology purchases, substitute costs, district wide supplies, and purchased services all had expense levels lower than that of those budgeted. Many of these savings can be directly attributed to the COVID related closure. The budget for the 20-21 school year was created using normal operating assumptions and COVID related adjustments will needed to be incorporated as part of our revised budgeting process. However, the operational savings that may be incurred in this current year will not be enough to offset the revenue loss associated with lower enrollment levels due to COVID.

Budget Assumptions for 2021-2022

As mentioned at the start of this document, the District is projecting an estimated budget deficit of around \$700,000 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year within its Unassigned General Fund. This basis for this calculation is outlined below:

FY21 Base Deficit Rolled into FY22	\$	(337,000)
Revenue Loss with Declining Enrollment		(100,000)
Compensatory Revenue Reduction		(103,000)
2% Salaries & Benefits Increase		(160,000)
Estimated Budget Deficit	\$	(700,000)

This assumption does not anticipate any increase to the State's General Education Revenue Formula. The last several years the formula has increased by 2% from year to year but given the state budget status this increase is not anticipated. The Governor has proposed an increase of 1% for the 21-22 year and then 2.5% for the 22-23 year, but these increases have not yet passed through the State's legislature. The District is taking the conservative approach of assuming no formula increase for the upcoming year until legislation is passed stating otherwise. In the event the formula is increased by 1% an estimate of \$50,000 can be added back.

Budget Options for February 16, 2021 Board Work Session

The District administration has worked to create two budget scenarios:

1. Move to a Two Building Format – K-5 all at Park Elementary (Close Hilltop)
2. Reduce Teaching Staff

Options exist that would provide the District with the necessary base reductions to maintain a fiscally responsible budget under both options. More work will need to be done in order to formalize final budget reductions, but direction is first needed as to which option the School Board wishes to pursue.

Closing Hilltop Elementary for the 21-22 School Year would not mean that a decision has been made regarding the location of any new building scenarios.

The District has the ability to incur significant savings if it were to operate out of only two buildings. In the short term, it comes down to a matter of space; Park Elementary can house all of K-5 while Hilltop Elementary cannot.

The following documents detail the adjustments as they sit currently under each scenario.

Adjustments at all Plan Levels:

Description of Reduction	Impact/Considerations	Reduction	Cost	Assumption
Reduction of Payroll Position	Payroll will be done by Business Manager	35,000.00	Cost per MVED	
Repair Maintainance to LTFM		34,000.00	Repairs will be Funded out of LTFM	
Lower Utility Budget	Utilities can be volatile depending on the winter.	40,000.00	PY was \$77k below budget. CY trending \$20k below PY.	
Transportation Costs		120,000.00	Looking for a contract more similar to market. If we don't find one we'll buy busses.	
Tech Budget - 'Core Switch'		45,000.00	E-Rate will allow us to make a purchase and receive 60% reimbursement under Category 2. Will plan for future years.	
Tech Budget - Reduction of R&M		4,000.00	Current budget is at \$7k - Total YTD in FY20 was \$1,320. We're not to far off for FY21.	
Special Elections Budget	Committ to a November Referendum Date	20,000.00	This would not require a special election at the District's cost if done in November	
Cuts Planned for all Plan Levels			298,000.00	

Close Hilltop-Relocate to Park | Curriculum Moves to Principal(s) | Move D.O.

NOTE - Closing Hilltop Elementary for the 21-22 school year would not mean that a decision has been made regarding the location of any new building scenarios.

Plan 1 Adjustments:

Description of Reduction	Impact/Considerations	Reduction	Cost	Assumption
Move Grades 4 & 5 to Park	Park Elementary has the space to fit all of PK-5 & Kids Club			
Reduce 1 Health Assistant	Hilltop Secretary to Park Front Office	Health Assistant 1.0 FTE	18,000.00	Based on FY21 Cost
Reduce Curriculum & Instruction TOSA	Curriculum moves to Principal, TOSA back to the Classroom	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	BA, 1 Teacher with Single Health
Reduce 1 SPED Teacher	Sharing a building would maximize case load configuration	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	
Reduce 0.5 ELL/0.5 SPED Para	Sharing a building would maximize case load configuration	Reduction of Para 1.0 FTE	20,000.00	
Reduce 1 Technology Para	Sharing a building reduces need for 2 tech paras	Reduction of Para 1.0 FTE	20,000.00	
Bussing - 1 Route (Possibility for a 2nd)	Potential for 2 bus routes to be reduced, 1 conservatively listed.		48,000.00	Represents one route, but could very well be two routes. Could be \$96k savings.
Hilltop Utility Savings	Based on 50% savings		27,000.00	
Hilltop General Repair & Maintenance	Dependent on future plans for the building.		13,000.00	
Travel Cost for 7 Staff Members	See 'Travel Time Value' as well - \$28k,		5,600.00	Mileage of \$800/per. Would save 30 minutes of commute time per Individual.
Move District Office to MSHS or Ziebarth			0.00	If DO is moved to Ziebarth, we would have to allocate utilities to the General Fund - \$5k
Cuts Planned at Specific Tier Level Total			253,600.00	
Adjustments from 'Base Adjustments' Tab			298,000.00	
Total Adjustments			551,600.00	

Time Value Lost with Sharing Staff:

	66,000.00	Average cost of teacher
/	8.00	Work Hours/Day
	8,250.00	Annual Cost Per Daily Hour
x	0.5	Travel Time/Day
	4,125.00	Travel Value Lost Per Employee
	7.00	Shared Time Staff
	28,875.00	Total Travel Value Lost with Shared Time

Close Hilltop-Relocate to Park | Reduce Principal | Move D.O.

NOTE - Closing Hilltop Elementary for the 21-22 school year would not mean that a decision has been made regarding the location of any new building scenarios.

Plan 2 Adjustments:

Description of Reduction	Impact/Considerations	Reduction	Cost	Assumption
Move Grades 4 & 5 to Park	Park Elementary has the space to fit all of PK-5 & Kids Club			
Reduce 1 Health Assistant	Hilltop Secretary to Park Front Office	Health Assistant 1.0 FTE	18,000.00	Based on FY21 Cost
Reduce Principal		Reduction of Principal 1.0 FTE	142,000.00	Based on FY21 Budget
Add Elementary Dean of Students			-107,000.00	Based on MSHS Dean of Students Cost
Reduce 1 SPED Teacher	Sharing a building would maximize case load configuration	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	
Reduce 0.5 ELL/0.5 SPED Para	Sharing a building would maximize case load configuration	Reduction of Para 1.0 FTE	20,000.00	
Reduce 1 Technology Para	Sharing a building reduces need for 2 tech paras	Reduction of Para 1.0 FTE	20,000.00	
Bussing - 1 Route (Possibility for a 2nd)	Potential for 2 bus routes to be reduced, 1 conservatively listed.		48,000.00	Represents one route, but could very well be two routes. Could be \$96k savings.
Hilltop Utility Savings	Based on 50% savings		27,000.00	
Hilltop General Repair & Maintenance	Dependent on future plans for the building.		13,000.00	
Travel Cost for 7 Staff Members	See 'Travel Time Value' as well - \$28k		5,600.00	Mileage of \$800/per. Would save 30 minutes of commute time per Individual.
Move District Office to MSHS or Ziebarth			0.00	
		Cuts Planned at Specific Tier Level Total	237,600.00	
		Adjustments from 'Base Adjustments' Tab	298,000.00	
		Total Adjustments	535,600.00	

Time Value Lost with Sharing Staff:

	66,000.00	Average cost of teacher
/	8.00	Work Hours/Day
	8,250.00	Annual Cost Per Daily Hour
x	0.5	Travel Time/Day
	4,125.00	Travel Value Lost Per Employee
	7.00	Shared Time Staff
	28,875.00	Total Travel Value Lost with Shared Time

Reduce Teaching Force | Hilltop Remains Open

Plan 3 Adjustments:

Description of Reduction	Impact/Considerations	Reduction	Cost	Assumption
Hilltop Stays Open	Building is kept open for the use of 4 classrooms.			
Reduce 2nd Grade Position	Class sizes 26 student per room	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	BA, 1 Teacher with Single Health
Reduce 3rd Grade Position	Class Sizes 27 students per room	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	BA, 1 Teacher with Single Health
Reduce 4th Grade Position	Section Size = 30.5	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	BA, 1 Teacher with Single Health
Reduce 5th Grade Position	Section size = 31.5	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	BA, 1 Teacher with Single Health
Reduce Curriuclum & Instruction TOSA	Curriculum moves to Principal	Reduction of Teacher 1.0 FTE	51,000.00	BA, 1 Teacher with Single Health
American Sign Language (ASL)			20,000.00	
		Cuts Planned at Specific Tier Level Total	275,000.00	
		Adjustments from 'Base Adjustments' Tab	298,000.00	
		Total Adjustments	573,000.00	

Class Size Estimate with Reduction of Teaching FTE:

	Seat Count		Avg Per	Avg								7 Year Change	% Change
	2020-2021	Sections	Section	Grade Size	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21		
K	55	3	18	K-5	78	75	70	70	68	67	59	-19	-24.36%
1	51	3	17	6-12	80	79	83	82	86	80	81	1	1.25%
2	55	3	18										
3	60	3	20										
4	62	3	21										
5	63	3	21										

	Estimate	Sections	Avg Per
	2021-2022		Section
K	60	3	20
1	56	3	19
2	50	2	25
3	52	2	26
4	60	2	30
5	64	2	32

Other Potential Budget Options Explored/Discussed & Other Additional Commentary:

- Option 3's Heavy Effect on Elementary
 - Our declining enrollment is primarily related to larger graduating classes being replaced by significantly smaller kindergarten class sizes. Since the 14-15 school year the average K-5 grade size has dropped by 19 students or -24% while the average grade size for 6-12 has remained relatively unchanged in that same time period. As the grade's progress through our District the effect on the MSHS will have greater effect. This is illustrated on the preceding class size illustration document.
 - Options and ideas will continue to be looked at both the MSHS and Elementary levels as we progress further into budget decisions.
- Activities & Athletics
 - Only represents roughly \$180k of our total budget after corresponding revenues are factored in. Could have severe consequences in terms of open enrollment options if reductions were made to activity programming.
- Increase Fund Raising Events
 - Though beneficial and greatly appreciated, these additional funds can not be relied on to bridge the funding gap created by declining enrollment. Of course, everything helps.
- Classroom Supplies
 - These have been cut to some degree every year for the last several years. Some areas will continue to be looked at, but these are small amounts.
- Ziebarth Building
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Community Education (CE) Funds are in charge of these operational expenses. Closing this building would not benefit the General Fund unless all of ABE's and Community Education operations were moved into either Park or the MSHS. If this were to happen we would experience minimal reduction of allocated utilities that would then transfer to ABE & CE.
- Kids Club
 - This program is under the Community Education Fund and will have no impact on our General Fund deficit. Plus, during non-pandemic times this program helps to subsidize Community Ed offerings as it's generally profitable.
- Driver's Education
 - This program is under the Community Education Fund and will have no impact on our General Fund deficit. Plus, during non-pandemic times this program helps to subsidize Community Ed offerings as it's generally profitable.
- Restructure our Technology Positions and Eliminate Costly Network Service Contract
 - Discussed reestablishing Director of Technology Position with a 260-day contract that would provide support for the District year-round. Position would require networking experience in order to eliminate costly contract with Computer Technology Support (CTS) costing \$47k annually. Would result in small cost savings. If we continue to

operate three buildings this option would still allow the District to reduce a technology para allowing for an additional \$20k in savings.

- Early Childhood Lease of St Paul's Church in Henderson
 - This expense is paid under Community Education and would have not impact on our General Fund deficit. This expense is also fully reimbursed through our Lease Levy.
- Custodial Staffing Levels
 - Even if we were to move to a two-building format the District would need to retain our full custodial staff. The same number of classrooms would still exist and our current ratio of square footage per custodians is still higher than industry recommendations.
- Buildings and Grounds Equipment Budget
 - This total budget was reestablished at \$20k going into the 19-20 school year and was a budget casualty for year previous. The District has aging vehicle and equipment inventory largely at the end of their useful lives. Work is being done to create an adequate replacement schedule.
- Food Service/Transporting Meals/Kitchen Staff
 - These expenditures all come out of the Food Service Fund. Would have no effect on General Fund if reduced.
 - Prior to pandemic, our Food Service Fund had experienced growth the past three years.
- Reducing Curriculum Budget
 - The District asked taxpayers to support an additional \$100 per pupil unit (weighted enrollment) for the primary reason of maintaining adequate curriculum funding. This would have us maintain a minimum level of spending within this budget area. This additional \$100 per pupil until generated roughly \$108k for our District for 19-20.
 - \$8k has been dedicated to maintaining/adding/updating Career and Technical Education Equipment. A replacement and purchase schedule is in development to adequately save for future large purchases. CTE offerings are attractive and vital to our students and community.
- AVID
 - Annual cost to participate is \$5,000. Three sections are offered and it's highly sought.
- MSU Fellow Position
 - Would require support a .50 FTE teacher. Potential to save \$30k as this would result in a reduction of a paid 1.0FTE to be filled by the Fellow.
- Online Learning Costs
 - The past several years we've seen increased participation in the online course offering through South Central Service Cooperative and Educere. The District pays by the semester for each course enrolled per student to these providers and then counts these students within the enrollment where we then receive state and local aid. Reducing these offerings would likely lead to a reduction in enrollment.
- Speech Partners Online Service at Elementary Level
 - This has been an effective program, but it's costly. The District has not been able to successfully hire a qualified speech professional to reduce this need. Will continue to post for the position.
 - This program requires a dedicated paraprofessional that would otherwise not be needed with in-person services.

- Move to a four-day school week.
 - Would require extended school day hours to meet MDE requirements. Prior to pandemic, MDE only allowed up to five distance learning days to be utilized within a school calendar. Other districts have tried this approach with limited success. Savings would be dependent on approach. Transportation would likely be the biggest savings.
- Eliminate Peer Coaching
 - This is included within our required 2% Staff Development Set Aside – not part of our unassigned fund balance. This budget is approximately \$13k. If we were to reduce this we'd have to fill it with additional staff related expenses. However, reclassification could be possible to move additional staff work days from unrestricted general fund budget within this restricted amount which would result in a savings.
- All Paraprofessional Contracts set at 6.50 Hrs/Day
 - The District has several para contracts in excess of 6.50 hours per day. Reduction of these hours would save over \$13k.
- Reduction of Field Trips
 - Our current Transportation contract which is set to expire at the end of the 20-21 fiscal year has a set expense level for these services – approximately \$54k. However, we do not anticipate having a one price option for these services as we enter the 21-22 fiscal year. Any reductions in field trips would have a corresponding reduction in expense.
- Reduction of the District Office Administrative Assistant Position
 - Duties would need to be distributed amongst existing secretarial staff with full time summer hours needed to support the superintendent. This would only be possible if our District Office was relocated to either the MSHS or Ziebarth. Reduction of this position could leave the incoming superintendent inadequately supported.
 - Discussed option of combining DO responsibilities with added district Communications/Marketing as a potential opportunity to market LSH at a greater level.
- Reduce Park Health Secretary Position
 - Would require the CE secretary to be positioned at Park Office if we stay with a three-building format. This option was originally planned as part of the initial 20-21 budget conversations. Would require more discussion as to where the CE/ABE Director would be officed and the usage of Ziebarth among other items.
- Faculty Leadership Stipends (FLT)
 - District currently pays 10 stipends related to this at \$1,489 per. Could reduce the number of stipends available.
- District Speakers
 - The District has budgeted for outside speakers to present to staff. These costs have traditionally come out of Staff Development and/or Title II Funding. Both are restricted funding sources not a part of the unassigned General Fund.
 - We've received donations for these speakers at times as well. Most recently, the Welter Foundation generously awarded the District \$5k for this use.