



...from the August 22, 2017 Board of Education Meeting

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Using Social Media to Tell the District's Story

John Hickman, of My School Grid, gave a presentation to the Board of Education on the importance of telling the District's story using social media, called [Connect + Engage + Activate](#). He explained that there are 56,000 active Facebook users in Elmhurst, probably 90% of the population.

"It's important to understand where your community is as a whole. Share the why behind the messaging. You can use social media to tell specific stories. Use it as a strategic communications tool and let the data drive the bus. Let your users determine what you do and communicate with purpose," he said. He urged to measure success by engagement, not by the number of likes or followers.

What is it you want to achieve?

- Community Engagement
- Facilities Needs
- Budget Squeeze
- Academic Excellence

Creating buzz requires:

- A worthy cause
- Making it visual
- Segmenting your audience
- Evoking positive emotions
- Making it easy for people to help you

Social media is cost effective, intensely personal, immediate, persuasive, flexible and visual – requiring pictures and video. It can be used for public opinion research, to engage your audience, to activate them and to share good news.

According to Mr. Hickman, the most active users are on Facebook (1.9 billion), Facebook Messenger (1.0 billion) and Instagram (400 million), which is owned by Facebook. Twitter lags at 320 million. A similar presentation was given to the District 205 principals the next day in a two-hour workshop.

Recap of Budget Year 2016-17

Chris Whelton, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, recapped the 2016-17 budget year using the [June Monthly Financial Report \(Cash Basis\)](#). The District's fiscal year runs from July 1- June 30.

"The year's financials finished extremely close to our budget (see fund balance statement, page 5). The actuals show a net surplus of \$139,446. O & M had a deficit due to the transfer to cover summer projects over the last two years when City TIF monies were not forthcoming.

Transportation and education funds also had deficits, since the District received only three quarterly payments from the State. The Illinois State Board of Education is now two payments delinquent, which resulted a negative budget variance of \$1.7 million in Elmhurst D205. We finished with the fund balance at 43.72% of expenditures," said Mr. Whelton, who also noted that May is the District's cash flow low point.

There was a change in June property tax collections which resulted in higher-than-expected revenues; fall taxes will end up being less as a result because more was collected in June. "Property tax really carried the revenues, since State funding was short," he noted. "Although new construction did exceed the estimate, a larger collection in June made the difference."

Last fiscal year, the received a small TIF 1 surplus distribution. In the current year it did not receive those monies, so that was another change. Two missing TIF payments equal \$2.6M, according to the City's figures.

Expenditures increased by 6.7% exceeding the budget by \$2.8M. Salaries represented a 3.2% increase over the prior year, while benefits reflected a 5% increase over the prior year.

The fund balance is currently 43.72%; policy is 26% of operating funds expenditures.

"The number one thing to remember is that the fund balance is a snapshot in time and is occurring right after we receive half (or, in this case, more) of our revenues for the year. We don't want to have to borrow to get through May 31st. The other reason is keep a higher fund balance to absorb some potential uncertainty, due to what's currently going on with funding at the State level, in order to avoid making extreme budget cuts," said Mr. Whelton.

Tentative Budget FY18

Mr. Whelton also presented the FY18 tentative budget. Revenues will be short of expenditures by \$3.07M. Property taxes account for 84% of D205 revenues, which are up 1.2% over the prior year. Four quarterly payments from the State were budgeted, but it is difficult to know how many will actually be received.

Expenditures for operating funds are estimated to increase by just under \$4.7 million or 4.0%. Salaries account for 63% and benefits are 14% of expenditures. "We are estimating a 7% increase in insurance costs. At a total of 77%, the two are increasing 5.73% overall (\$4.6 million). Additionally, we do have a transfer from O & M of \$1.2M for next summer's project. That's the money that was supposed to come from TIF 1," said Mr. Whelton.

Fund balances for operating funds are expected to decrease by about \$3 million to 39.54% of expenditures.

"Certified staff are up 17.95 full time equivalents (FTE); special education assistants are down 8.0 FTE. We now have 694 certified staff, averaging an increase of 13 per year over the last six years. This trend is not sustainable," said Mr. Whelton.

"I expect that special education will be flat and general education costs will go down. EL might change, due to laws related to exit criteria. We won't be hiring any more instructional coaches. As we look at our long-term programming and Return on Investment, I think we will find some efficiencies there. One of the last areas would be the ability to gain efficiencies through the possible reconfiguration of facilities. We do have options available to us," said Superintendent Dave Moyer.

Regarding the fluctuation in fund balance, Chris Blum commented "It doesn't take much to change the level of need. I always want to make sure that we have runway for what the State might do to us. I just hope we have the time to deal with this in a pragmatic way."

John McDonough noted "We are moving forward with a deficit budget because the City of Elmhurst is not releasing the TIF 1 funds as it promised the community in a 2004 intergovernmental agreement. They say that they are not legally required to do that. We disagree.

"We think the agreement legally requires them to release everything once they were paid back. They say the agreement says they get to keep more than their share. They say the agreement lets them get another piece of cake after they've eaten theirs. Our piece of cake.

"But what is most troubling to this community is that they think the agreement lets them break their promises to this community - the promises that they will value education on an equal footing with their business incentives and subsidies.

"Those promises to the community were and remain unambiguous. Don't take their summaries of what it says. Read it yourself. Read the language of the [March 2004 Agreement](#) itself. Read their own words from the Front Porch in 2004 ([May issue](#)). And in every update after that, all the way until 2013 when a new administration simply changed its mind.

"So this is why we're in deficit. Because we're not going to let their irresponsibility in simply changing their minds about what's important in this town detract in any way from the education in this community. We're taking on financial risk, but we're really trying to protect what we really value - our education system in Elmhurst.

"We're taking on financial risk because the City of Elmhurst doesn't share the same values, the same sense of priority, the same sense of what's important in this community," he concluded.

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA – CONSENT

With all members present, the Board voted 7-0 to approve the following items:

- Personnel Report
- Financial Reports
- Acceptance and Posting of FY18 Tentative Budget
- Purchase of a 3-Year Subscription to Cisco Email Security
- District-wide Title I Plan
- Retirement Agreement

Mr. McDonough removed item E (Title I Plan) and Jim Collins removed item F (Retirement Agreement).

"The reason we're approving this Title I plan is because the State changed a rule that says the Board must approve it. I'm grateful so that we do so mindfully and intentionally. This is an important issue. Title I is an anti-poverty program. One of the problems is its invisibility," said Mr. McDonough.

"Free and reduced lunch is the educational term for the poverty level - one in seven of our York Dukes lives in poverty (14%). Fischer has 59% - if you don't know how poverty affects kids, just talk to one of our professionals. If you're looking for data, there's quite a bit of research which is pretty clear. The key is that the earlier the intervention, the better. Madison has done great things. If we're going to live our belief statement, we need to know how to use our resources to address this issue.

"That's double the number of York students in the last ten years; 300% growth at Churchville and 500% growth at Fischer. Fischer is our only building that qualifies for school-wide assistance. Our other school qualified for targeted assistance. You have to determine who your most academically at-risk students. Schools and districts determine who these students are.

"You will see an increased number of tech devices at Fischer funded by Title I funding. We have parent liaisons, which is a critical piece in breaking down barriers between home and school. Our summer school programs at these schools are funded by Title I. It's critical in continuing the academic development of our students. I have a real concern when I look at the decrease in funding from the federal government. Title I funding can only be used for additional materials; it cannot supplant," he explained.

Dr. Mary Henderson, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Leadership Development, said that she will be working with the principals and looking at the data to see what has had the most positive impact on our students.

Dr. Moyer said the situation is compounded by cuts in categorical funding "because we are still required by law to provide those services. It's the right thing to do, but we just don't have the flexibility in some cases and are not receiving the funding promised."

Karen Stuefen noted the budget squeeze public education and District 205 is feeling comes from all sides – local, state and federal.

Executive Director of Communications Melea Smith will be retiring at the conclusion of this school year. The Board approved a retirement contract for her which will include 20 days of consulting in 2018-19 to assist with transition.

Jim Collins and Shannon Ebner both complimented Ms. Smith on her work and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board for her service over the past seven years.

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA – ACTION

The Board voted 7-0 to approve the following items one at a time:

- Donation (York High School) - Elmhurst Airborne Travel Basketball \$1,498 to York Girls BB
- Donation Agreement with Elmhurst Swim Team – \$23,348 for starting blocks

Mrs. Ebner thanked Elmhurst Airborne for the donation. "They've been around for a long time and have supported our students in many ways over the years," she said.

Dr. Moyer outlined the agreement between the Elmhurst Swim Team and the District. "Our starting blocks are two generations removed. In exchange for this, we will lock in their facilities rental agreement amount for the next five years. The gift far outweighs those monies."

Mr. Blum thanked the organization for their generous donation. "These blocks allow us to host IHSA events and conference meets. This was something the District was going to have to purchase in the near future. This is more of a need than a want to remain competitive within the conference."

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMUNICATION

Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) requests

There were four FOIA requests filed:

- Two requesting specific RFP information, which was granted.
- One requesting specific employee salaries, which was granted.
- One requesting information not intended for our district, which was denied.

York High School U.S. News and World Report Ranking

York was recently ranked 18th in the State of Illinois and 687 in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*. "Sometimes the criteria are narrowly defined. I personally think York is better than 18th, but the metrics used by *US News*. This data is actually based on 2014-15. This includes the PARCC results, so we should keep that in perspective," said Dr. Moyer.

The *Niche* rankings have District 205 at 8th in the State, but use a different set of metrics, including comments from the community.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. McDonough attended the SASSED Board meeting where the 2017-18 budget was passed. There was a 2% reduction in revenues and a 3% reduction in expenses.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

September 12 - Board of Education Meeting - 7:30 PM - District 205 Center

September 18 - Superintendent's State of the Schools Address - 7:00 PM - York HS Commons

September 26 - Board of Education Meeting - 7:30 PM - District 205 Center

October 10 - Board of Education Meeting - 7:30 PM - District 205 Center

NOTE: Video footage of all Board of Education regular meetings are usually posted on [205TV](#) within 48-72 hours. Audio is posted within 24 hours at <http://www.elmhurst205.org/Audio> (please click on appropriate meeting date).

Past editions of Board Highlights are posted/archived at www.elmhurst205.org/BOE_highlights.