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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

We believe it is very important to be transparent and proactive in our communication. Understanding school finances and our budget is imperative as we move forward. Below are the most frequently asked questions we are receiving along with answers. For a deeper dive into all things school finance related please listen to our podcast. **Episode 2 will be available using the link below on Sunday, February 20th at 6pm.**

All of the podcast episodes can be found at: <https://rossrams.buzzsprout.com>

One of the most common questions we are receiving is about the opening of the Ross Intermediate building and the costs associated with the project.

1. What was the cost of the Intermediate building?

The cost of the Intermediate building renovations was approximately \$3 million. The cost was paid for by the PI Fund and financed through a loan from the State of Ohio over 14 years at 0.25% interest rate. To put this in perspective, adding an additional wing on one of our current buildings would cost around \$5 million and constructing a new building would be around \$16-17 million. To that end, the renovation was the most cost effective option.

The additional personnel salary cost to the general fund is approximately \$250,000. The vast majority of the RIS staff were transferred from Elda/Morgan/RMS when 4th & 5th grades were moved from those buildings. As a cost saving measure, we did reduce one section of both 4th & 5th grade during this transition, meaning there were 18 total classrooms of 4th and 5th graders in the 2020-21 school year and 16 this year. Not filling those two teaching positions is a savings to the district. We are also utilizing existing staff with creative scheduling. As an example, 3 out of 4 specials (Art/Music/PE) are being taught by Elda/Morgan/RMS staff traveling to RIS so we did not have to add positions. The added cost to the general fund is for the additional staff to operate RIS including secretarial, custodial, student support (paraprofessionals), and PBL special along with some replacement positions for those that were transferred from other buildings in the District.

Also, it's important to remember that we were able to add tuition based full day Kindergarten this year due to the creation of RIS which is slated to bring in approximately \$144,560 in tuition for the 2021-2022 school year.

2. Why did we open the Intermediate Building?

There are several reasons why we opened this building. It took our fourth grade out of the current elementary school buildings and fifth grade out of the middle school, adding space for our all day kindergarten program. A survey we sent out to parents showed that 70% were very interested in pursuing our all-day kindergarten program. We currently have 68 students enrolled in all day kindergarten and are anticipating that number to increase over the next couple of years. We now have open space in our elementary buildings to accommodate this growth due to 4th graders being housed at RIS.

RIS also allowed more space in our current middle school, which was overcrowded. The Ross Local School District administration made this decision because we felt it was best for the children academically, socially, and emotionally. The fourth and fifth grade model is also good for our children. The overwhelming majority of the feedback we've received from families in the RIS building is extremely positive. They feel their children are benefiting academically and socially from this new environment.